

BRITAIN,  
ITALY  
AND THE EARLY COLD WAR:

Aspects of British Foreign Policy towards Italy, 1946-49.

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PhD Thesis

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines political and military aspects of British policy towards Italy during 1946-1949. It focuses on five major areas: the punishment of Italian war criminality, the reconstruction of the Italian Armed forces, the role of Italy in British plans for European cooperation, British involvement in the Italian election of April 1948 and Italy's inclusion into NATO. It analyses the factors that influenced the evolution of British policy such as pressures from the emerging Cold War, Britain's diminished power in the region and its desire to remain a major international player in the post WWII world. It evaluates the impact that Italian domestic politics and Italian realities had on the conception and execution of British policy. It reveals that British policy towards Italy was governed not only by British power politics, the desire to frustrate the designs of the Soviet Union and the Italian Communists, and the challenge of growing US influence in Italy but also by moral and ideological underpinnings such as the desire to secure the punishment of some of the worst Italian war criminals and the aspiration, as manifested by British intervention in the Italian election of 1948, to provide Italy with a form of government which was a social democratic anti-Communist alternative to the American form based on an undiluted capitalism. British policy during this period had intended to include Italy in any British plans for European cooperation when the time was right. Its resistance to Italian inclusion into NATO stemmed primarily from pragmatism rather than any persisting punitive attitudes towards a defeated opponent. British foreign policy towards Italy did not achieve all its aims but it cannot, even remotely, be described as a failure. Italy remained firmly anchored in the Western bloc, the seeds of social democracy were nurtured, disengagement was managed in an orderly and successful manner and the British stance over Italo-Yugoslav relations succeeded in neutralising potential dangers to Italy by helping to expose Stalin in the eyes of the Yugoslavs.



## **Table of Contents**

1. Title.....	1
2. Abstract.....	2
3. Table of contents.....	3
4. Preface.....	4
5. Introduction.....	6
6. British Policy towards the Prosecution of Italian War Criminals.....	18
7. Britain and the Reconstruction of the Post-Fascist Italian Armed Forces.....	84
8. The 'British Way to Socialism': British Intervention in the Italian Elections of April 1948 and its Aftermath.....	145
9. The Birth of the North Atlantic Alliance: Britain and the Issue of Italian Membership.....	222
10. Italy's Role in British Plans for European Cooperation.....	296
11. Conclusion.....	358
12. Glossary of Abbreviations.....	366
13. Bibliography.....	369

## Preface

My interest in this subject arose from research that I carried out for my MA dissertation on Anglo-Italian relations during the 'phoney war' period and from M. Palumbo's article in *Epoca* on Italian war crimes against Yugoslavia<sup>1</sup> during the Second World War. When I read David Ellwood's superb book on the Allied Administration of Italy<sup>2</sup> I wanted badly to find out what happened next. As soon as I started researching postwar Anglo-Italian relations I noticed a large gap in English language secondary literature on the role Britain played in the political and military reconstruction of Italy during 1946-49 and I decided that this would provide an interesting and exiting research topic.

The thesis is based mainly on documents held at the Public Record Office at Kew Gardens and in particular the FO 371, FO 953, FO 800, FO 1110, CAB 65, CAB 66, CAB 79, CAB 80, CAB 128, CAB 129, CAB 131, PREM 8, WO 204, WO 32 and DEFE 4, 5 and 6 series. In addition research was carried out at the Italian Foreign Ministry Archive (*Archivio Storico e Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri*, ASMAE), the Italian State Central Archive (*Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, ACS) in Rome, the National Archive and Record Administration (NARA), in Maryland and the Historical archive of the Greek Foreign Ministry, in Athens and at the Labour History Archive and Study Centre of the Museum of Labour History, in Manchester. The Foreign Relations of the United States and Documents on British Policy Overseas series have been indispensable sources as were the many newspaper articles of the period.

In the course of researching and writing this thesis, I have acquired debts to many people and institutions which I wish to acknowledge, though, of course, the responsibility for any mistakes and interpretations belongs to me and me alone. I should like to thank to the British Academy for a three year fees-only award (1989-92) and the Central Research Fund of the University of London

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<sup>1</sup>. Palumbo, M., 'Genocidio all' Italiana', *Epoca*, 17-1-1988.

<sup>2</sup>. Ellwood, D.W., *Italy, 1943-45*, Leicester, 1985.

for meeting part of my expenses for a research trip to Rome in 1991-2. I should also like to thank the staff of the Public Record Office, the British Library of Political and Economic Science, the British Library, the Humanities Library at KCL, the ASMAE, ACS, NARA, the Labour History Archive of the Museum of Labour History, Churchill College, Cambridge and the Greek Foreign Ministry archive for their patience, assistance and willingness to help me beyond the call of duty.

I should like to thank Dr Robert W. D. Boyce for his patience and supervision, Prof. Donald Cameron Watt for encouraging and supporting me throughout this project, Prof. David Stevenson for his support during the early stages of this thesis, Dr Zara Steiner for being such an inspirational teacher and introducing me to the intricate and challenging world of diplomatic history, Prof. Antonio Varsori, for his perceptive comments and his efforts to keep me up to date with any new additions to Italian historiography and Prof. Paul Preston for encouraging me to finish. I should like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr Saki Dockrill, Dr Kate J. Morris, Dr Lisa N. Pine, Dr Pamela J. Shatzkes and Prof. John W. Young for reading endless drafts, offering invaluable advice and, above all, loyalty, friendship and support throughout what must have been for them an interminable period of time.

Finally, a note of personal thanks and gratitude to my parents Eleni and George Pandalios for their love, unfailing support and trust. I must extend a special thanks to Prof. Mike L. Dockrill and Andrew Fields for helping me keep my sanity by never taking me too seriously. Last but not least and above all my thanks go to Jimmy D. Athanassiou for his unstinting support during good and bad times, his willingness to sacrifice his personal life and time to discuss problems and help me edit my never ending reams of paper into something readable.

## Introduction

From the moment Mussolini had forsaken 'non-belligerency' and had embarked on his 'parallel war' against the British Empire it was a matter of time when Italy would have to pay for the 'curse' Garibaldi had so sternly warned it against.<sup>1</sup> The combined Royalist and Fascist coup that deposed Mussolini led to the unconditional surrender of Italy in September 1943 and brought with it the division of the country and the placing of the Southern Kingdom under the direct control and administration of Britain and America. Britain, because of its logistical superiority in the Mediterranean theatre of war was initially the 'senior' partner in this relationship and thus the extremely harsh Armistice terms were to reflect the British government's punitive attitude towards Italy.<sup>2</sup> Anglo-Italian relations suffered during the period of 'co-belligerency' because of Anthony Eden's almost 'irrational' and at times quasi 'psychotic' anti-Italianism and Winston Churchill's mercurial disposition which fluctuated between bountiful generosity, utter contempt and blatant disregard for basic Italian dignity and sensibilities according to his mood swings or political expediency.<sup>3</sup> This situation alarmed many including the Foreign Office, Harold Macmillan, the

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<sup>1</sup>. Giuseppe Garibaldi stated that 'there should be a curse upon Italy if she were to break away from her friendship with Britain'. On Mussolini's 'parallel war' see Knox, M., *Mussolini Unleashed, 1939-43: Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War*, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 53-4, 88-9 and 272-89; Kogan, N., *Italy and the Allies*, Cambridge, 1956; Woodward, Sir L., *British Foreign Policy during the Second World War*, Vols. II and III, London, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>. On British punitive attitudes towards Italy during this period see Varsori, A., 'L'atteggiamento britannico verso d'Italia, 1940-3: alle origini della politica punitiva', in Placanica, A., (ed), *1944, Salerno, capitale istituzioni e società*, Napoli, 1985, pp. 137-59. On the development of British policy towards Italy during 1943-45 see Ellwood, op. cit.; Ellwood, D.W., 'From "Re-Education" to the Selling of the Marshall Plan in Italy' in Pronay, N., and Spring, D.W., (eds), *The Political Re-Education of Germany and her Allies after World War II*, London, 1985, pp. 219-38; Aga-Rossi, E., *L'Italia nella sconfitta: politica interna e situazione internazionale durante la seconda guerra mondiale*, Napoli, 1985; Filippone-Thaulero, G., *La Gran Bretagna e l'Italia dalla Conferenza di Mosca a Potsdam, 1943-45*, Roma, 1979.

<sup>3</sup>. Ellwood, *Italy*, p. 9; Clark, M., *Modern Italy, 1871-1995*, London, 1996, p. 306.

British Resident Minister, the British military authorities in Italy and antagonised the Americans who were committed to rebuilding Italy as an anti-communist bastion. More significantly, it alienated the Italians who sought to cultivate the more amenable Americans, who as a result of British attitudes, by 1945 had seen a phenomenal increase of their power in the peninsula.<sup>4</sup>

The first signs of a declining British influence in Italy were manifested after the collapse of Badoglio's Government and the assumption of the Italian premiership by Ivanoe Bonomi the reformist socialist leader. Churchill had been forced to accept 'parity' in Italian affairs with the Americans by early 1945.<sup>5</sup> The period 1943-45, was in a sense a microcosm of the shift that was transforming the international system into a bi-polar one after the eclipse of Continental and the decline of British power. The contraction of European power left a vacuum which in the Western and anti-communist world came to be filled, reluctantly but yet inexorably, by the recently awakened interventionism of American power. By summer 1945, Britain had come to welcome and even encourage American interest in the region in an effort to lessen its own financial burdens and to concentrate on rebuilding its strength and to defeating the 'Wind from the North', the influence of the Italian resistance in Italian politics.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>4</sup>. Macmillan, H., *War Diaries: Politics and War in the Mediterranean, January 1943 - May 45*, London, 1982, pp. 595, 388, 680-1 and 694; Horne, A., *Harold Macmillan: Volume I: 1894-1956*, London, 1988, pp. 218-9; Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 1-2, 23-5 and 137-8 and 201; Ellwood, 'Re-Education', p. 222; Miller, J.E., *The United States and Italy, 1940-1950*, Chapel Hill, 1986, pp. 102-4; NARA RG 59, Department of State, Decimal Files: 740.00119, CONTROL, (ITALY)/ 2-2445, Box: 3797, Office memorandum to J.D. Hickerson, Deputy Director of the Office of European Affairs, State Department and J.C. Dunn, Director of the Office of European Affairs, 22-2-1945; *ibid.*, confidential, memorandum of conversation between Hickerson and R. Makins, Acting Minister, British Embassy in Washington, 24-2-1945; *ibid.*, confidential, memorandum of conversation between Hickerson and Makins, 5-3-1945.

<sup>5</sup>. For a detailed analysis of the issue see Varsori, A., ' "Senior" o "Equal" Partner?', *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, Vol. 2, 1978, pp. 229-60; Ellwood, *Italy*, pp. 23-5; Miller, op. cit., pp. 117-127.

<sup>6</sup>. *Ibid.*; Gat, M., *Britain and Italy, 1943-49: The Decline of British*

replacement of Ferruccio Parri, Italy's first Prime Minister after the end of the Second World War in Europe, in December 1945 with Alcide De Gasperi, signified that 'the Wind from the North had died' as Nenni so aptly put it<sup>7</sup> and that the ascendancy of American power in the region had begun.<sup>8</sup> The baggage from the 'co-belligerency' period was compounded by Britain's inability to sooth Italian feelings with economic inducements and was to encumber the relations of the two countries in the immediate future.

In the meanwhile, the British people had decided, to give the Labour Party not only the opportunity to govern but also to underpin it for the first time ever with an absolute majority.<sup>9</sup> The new Labour government, whilst attempting to build its social democratic 'Jerusalem' at home, was at the same time striving to ensure that Britain could still shape the international environment in a way that would be beneficial to its traditional interests and aims.<sup>10</sup> Britain emerged from WWII with its imperial commitments enlarged through its trusteeship over Italy's ex-colonies, its international prestige enhanced as one of the victors of the War and as the strongest Western European state but also with its economy in tatters. For the British economy the burden of fighting the war against the

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*Influence*, Brighton, 1996, pp. 109 and 135.

<sup>7</sup>. Mercuri, L., 'Il primo governo De Gasperi e il problema dell'epurazione', in *Le Forze Armate dalla liberazione all' adesione alla NATO*, Official History edited by the Italian Ministry of Defence, Rome, 1986, p. 140.

<sup>8</sup>. Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 22-3; Miller, op. cit., pp. 154-87; Piscitelli, E., *Da Parri a De Gasperi: Storia del dopoguerra, 1945-48*, Milano, 1975, pp. 11-138.

<sup>9</sup>. Morgan, K. O., *Labour in Power, 1945-51*, Oxford, 1987; Hennessy, P., *Never Again: Britain, 1945-1951*, London, 1992.

<sup>10</sup>. Young, J. W., *Britain and the World in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1997, pp. 142-56; Warner, G., 'Britain and Europe in 1948: the View from the Cabinet', in Becker, J., and Knipping, F., (eds), *Power in Europe? Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a Postwar World, 1945-50*, Berlin, 1986, pp. 28-37; Adamthwaite, A., 'Britain and the World, 1945: the View from the Foreign Office' in Becker and Knipping, op. cit., pp. 12-20; Hennessy, op. cit., Chapters 3, 4 and 9.

Axis alone for nearly two years had taken a severe toll. During the war Britain lost a quarter of its national wealth and this had left it weaker than the United States and the Soviet Union, the two emerging superpowers.<sup>11</sup> Bi-polarity however, had not settled in the international system yet and Britain still outwardly appeared to be not just a great power but a superpower.<sup>12</sup>

The new Labour government, although painfully aware of the adverse realities facing Britain, was not prepared to give in without trying to reverse the difficult position in which the country found itself. In any case, it regarded the situation as a transient handicap which could be rectified and overcome.<sup>13</sup> As Peter Hennessy has observed, Ernest Bevin, the Labour Foreign Secretary, 'was not one to relinquish voluntarily one ounce of British power'.<sup>14</sup> He was also prepared to defy the internationalism of the new Prime Minister, Clement R. Attlee, to follow a foreign policy that was geared towards ensuring that Britain retained independence from both the United States and the Soviet Union and that it remained if not one of the 'Big-Three' in the postwar world, then at least it would be one of the 'Big Two and a half'.<sup>15</sup> The achievement of this policy

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<sup>11</sup> Peden, G.C., 'Economic Aspects of British Perceptions of Power in the Eve of the Cold War', in Becker and Knipping, (eds), op. cit., pp. 237-260; Northedge, F.S., *Descent from Power: British Foreign Policy, 1945-73*, London, 1974; Reynolds, D., 'The European Dimension of the Cold War' in Leffler, M.P. and Painter, D.S., (eds), *Origins of the Cold War: An International History*, London, 1994, p. 128.

<sup>12</sup> Reynolds, D., *Britannia Overruled: British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century*, London, 1991, p. 173.

<sup>13</sup> FO 371/50912/U5471/5471, 11-7-1945, top secret, Revise, 'Stocktaking Memorandum', drafted by Sir Orme G. Sargent, Deputy Under-Secretary of the FO, 11-7-1945; Adamthwaite, op. cit., pp. 12-16; Kent, J., *British Imperial Strategy and the Cold War*, Leicester, 1993, pp. 54-6; Young, op. cit., pp. 142-8 and 153-6; Warner, 'Britain and Europe', pp. 35-8; Bullock, A., *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary*, Oxford, 1985, pp. 111-3.

<sup>14</sup> Hennessy, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>15</sup> For Attlee's and Bevin's disagreements see Smith, R., and Zametica, J., 'The Cold Warrior: Clement Attlee Reconsidered, 1945-47', *International Affairs*, Vol., 61, 1985, pp. 237-52; Kent, J., 'The British Empire and the Origins



rested on harnessing the resources of the Empire, promoting cooperation with Europe, using American aid to 'gain time' for the British economy to recover to such a degree as to support an equidistant foreign policy from both superpowers, exploiting Labour's links with international socialism, taking advantage of Britain's diplomatic prestige and manipulating the emergent cold war in order to safeguard its traditional interests.<sup>16</sup> It also rested on the ability of Britain to remain a Mediterranean power, something on which Bevin was adamant because this region along with the adjacent Middle East was closely associated with its position as a World Power, the security of the imperial lines of communication, the preservation of the Empire and the safe access to oil supplies. From the moment Britain had identified the Soviet Union as posing a challenge to its preeminence in the Mediterranean, Labour Britain's efforts to reconstruct Italy and Greece 'as bastions of liberalism' began in earnest. The continuation of British interest in Italy became inevitable because of its geostrategic importance for Britain and increased even further as soon as

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of the Cold War, 1944-9' in Deighton, A., *Britain and the First Cold War*, London, 1990, pp. 166-77; CAB 131/1, top secret, DO(46)5, 15-2-1946; *ibid*, top secret, DO(46) 8, 18-3-1946; FO 371/50912/U5471/5471/G, 11-7-1945, top secret, Revise, 'Stocktaking Memorandum', drafted by Orme Sargent, 11-7-1945.

<sup>16</sup> Kent, *British Imperial Strategy*, p. 71; Kent, J., 'British Policy and the Origins of the Cold War' in Leffler and Painter, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-53; Kent, J., 'Bevin's Imperialism and the Idea of Euro-Africa, 1945-49' in Dockrill, M.L., and Young, J.W., *British Foreign Policy, 1945-56*, London, 1989, pp. 47-76; Woodward, Sir. L., *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, Vol. V, London, 1976, pp. 3-4; Adamthwaite, *op. cit.*, p. 12-3; Dilks, D., *Retreat from Power*, Vol. 2, London, 1981, p. 21; Warner, G., 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe, 1945-51', in Ovendale, R., (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the British Labour Governments, 1945-51*, Leicester, 1984, pp. 61-82; CAB 128/14, confidential, Annex, CM(48)19th, 5-3-1948.

Italy's susceptibility to Communism became evident<sup>17</sup> and the Greek Civil War showed no signs of abating.<sup>18</sup>

The policy of the Conservative-dominated National government towards Italy has been thoroughly and eloquently treated by Ellwood's books and articles as well as by Italian historians.<sup>19</sup> The historiography of British foreign policy

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<sup>17</sup>. FO 371/43335/N2409/183/38, 21-4-1944, minute by E. O. Skaife, USSR Section, Research Department of the Foreign Office, (FORD), 5-4-1944; *ibid.*, N2883/183/38, 12-5-1944, top secret, PHP(43)1(O), Post-Hostilities Planning Committee, Revised Draft, 24-4-1944; FO 371/56831/N3742/605/38, 21-3-1946, top secret, telegram, no. 1090, F.K. Roberts, *chargé d'affaires* at the British Embassy in Moscow, 21-3-1946; PREM 8/515, top secret, COS(46)43(O), 13-2-46; CAB 131/1, top secret, DO(46)5, 15-2-1946; *ibid.*, top secret, DO(46) 8, 18-3-1946; Arcidiacono, B., 'La Gran Bretagna e il "pericolo comunista" in Italia: gestazione, nascita e primo sviluppo di una percezione, 1943-44', *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, Vol. III, 1985, pp. 239-266; Ross, G., 'Foreign Office Attitudes to the Soviet Union, 1941-45', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 16, 1981, pp. 521-40; Ellwood, D.W., 'Al tramonto dell' impero britannico: Italia e Balkani nella strategia inglese, 1942-1946', *Italia Contemporanea*, Vol. XXXI, 1979, pp. 73-92, *passim*; Ross, G., *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin: British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1941-45*, Cambridge, 1984; Roger Louis, W., *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-51*, Oxford, 1984; Rothwell, V.H., *Britain and the Cold War, 1941-47*, London, 1982, pp. 74-290, *passim*; Watt, D.C., 'Britain the United States and the Opening of the Cold War', in Ovendale, (ed), *op. cit.*, p. 50-5 and 57-9; Watt, D.C., 'British Military Perceptions of the Soviet Union as a Strategic Threat, 1945-50' in Becker and Knipping, (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 328-335; Woodward, *op. cit.*, 471-91; Adamthwaite, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Kent, 'British Policy', pp. 139-52.

<sup>18</sup>. On Britain and the Greek Civil War see Alexander, G.M., *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine: British Policy in Greece, 1944-47*, Oxford, 1982; Eudes, D., *The Kapetanios: Partisans and the Civil War in Greece, 1943-49*, London, 1973; Iatrides, J.O., *Revolt in Athens: The Greek Communist 'second round', 1944-45*, Princeton, 1972; Papastratis, P., *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War, 1941-44*, London, 1984; Richter, H., *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946*, London, 1986; Woodhouse, C.M., *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-49*, London 1976; Woodhouse, C.M., *Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in their International Setting*, London, 1948; Xydis, S., *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-47: Prelude to the 'Truman Doctrine'*, Thessaloniki, 1963.

<sup>19</sup>. Ellwood, D.W., *Italy, 1943-45*, Leicester, 1985 *op. cit.*; Ellwood, D.W., 'Al tramonto', pp. 73-92, *passim*; Filippone-Thaulero, *op. cit.*; Woodward, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, Chapter XLIV; Arcidiacono, *op. cit.*; Varsori, *op. cit.*; Piscitelli, *op. cit.*; Gambino, A., *Storia del dopoguerra dalla liberazione al potere CD*, Rome, 1978; Mammarella, G., *Italy After Fascism: A Political History, 1943-1965*, Notre Dame, 1966; Tamaro, A., *Due anni di storia, 1943-45*, Vol. II, Roma, 1948.

towards Italy during 1946-49 is rather sparse. This is the period of transition that anchored Italy firmly and irrevocably in the Western bloc and which Ennio di Nolfo has characterised as an 'epoch, in Italian contemporary history which was dominated by tragedy, hope and disillusionment'.<sup>20</sup> Moshe Gat's recent volume on the topic of Anglo-Italian relations has incorporated the period as a mere appendage to that of the Allied administration period.<sup>21</sup> His treatment of the Labour government's policy towards Italy during 1946-49 is rather short and superficial. His conclusions are heavily biased by his research into the policies of the wartime British government during 1943-45. He sees Labour policy towards Italy as being identical in its aims and motivated by similar punitive reflexes as those of Churchill and Eden.<sup>22</sup> The books by James E. Miller,<sup>23</sup> E. Timothy Smith<sup>24</sup> and H. Stuart Hughes<sup>25</sup> on Italian-American relations offer useful insights but treat British policy only indirectly. Martin Folly's article on Britain, Italy and NATO<sup>26</sup> which has stood the test of time very well and Saul Kelly's doctoral thesis on the United States and Britain and the disposal of the Italian ex-colonies<sup>27</sup> are both extremely valuable studies but, by their very nature, they are topic specific and therefore many of the seminal attempts by the British government to reconstruct postwar Italy are not

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<sup>20</sup>. Di Nolfo, E., *Le paure e le speranze degli Italiani, 1943-1953*, Milano, 1986, p. 269.

<sup>21</sup>. Gat, op. cit.

<sup>22</sup>. Ibid., pp., 117-182, passim.

<sup>23</sup>. Miller, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup>. Smith, E. T., *The United States, Italy and NATO, 1947-52*, London, 1991.

<sup>25</sup>. Hughes, H. S., *The United States and Italy*, Cambridge, Mass., 1979.

<sup>26</sup>. Folly, M., 'Britain and the Issue of Italian Membership of NATO, 1948-49, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 13, 1987, pp. 177-96.

<sup>27</sup>. Kelly, S.M.B., *Britain, the United States and the Question of the Italian Colonies, 1940-52*, PhD thesis, London School of Economics, University of London, 1995.

covered. Italian historiography is a much richer source but even here, the main emphasis lies in the period up to 1945 and research in the post 1945 period is again rather confined to topic specific areas. The historian who has worked most in this field is Antonio Varsori and his voluminous contribution is invaluable.<sup>28</sup> Other Italian historians who have produced well researched books that treat aspects of Anglo-Italian relations are Leopoldo Nuti,<sup>29</sup> Ilaria Poggiolini<sup>30</sup> and P. Sebastiani.<sup>31</sup> However, all these are works that focus either on the impact of Allied policy or on specific topics and they are not syntheses that would allow for a wide overview of British policy to emerge.

The purpose of the present work is to focus on the political and military aspects of British policy towards Italy in order to establish its principal threads and its successes and limitations. The chronological span covered begins from the moment that the Allied Administration of Italy ended and the whole of Italy with the exception of Venezia Giulia came under the control of the new postwar

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<sup>28</sup>. Varsori, A., *Il diverso declino di due potenze coloniali. Gli eventi di Mogadiscio del Gennaio 1948 e i rapporti anglo-italiani*, Roma, 1981; Varsori, A., 'Bevin e Nenni, Ottobre 1946-Gennaio 1947: Una fase nei rapporti anglo-italiani del secondo dopoguerra', *Il Politico*, Vol. XLIX, 1984, pp. 241-75; Varsori, A., 'L'incerta rinascita di una "tradizionale amizia": I colloqui Bevin-Sforza dell'ottobre 1947', *Storia Contemporanea*, Vol. XVI, 1984, pp. 593-645; Varsori, A., 'La Gran Bretagna e le elezioni politiche italiane del 18 aprile 1948', in *Storia Contemporanea*, Vol. XIII, no. 1, 1982, pp. 5-71; Varsori, A., 'De Gasperi, Nenni, Sforza and their Role in Post-War Italian Foreign policy', in Becker, J., and Knipping, F., (eds), *Power in Europe? Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany in a Postwar World, 1945-50*, Berlin, 1986, pp. 89-114; Varsori, A., 'Great Britain and Italy, 1945-56: The partnership between a great Power and a Minor Power?', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 3, 1992, pp. 188-228; Varsori, A., 'Il Labour Party e la crisi del socialismo italiano, 1947-48'; Varsori, A., ' "Senior" o "Equal" Partner?', pp. 229-60.

<sup>29</sup>. Nuti, L., *L'esercito italiano nel secondo dopoguerra, 1945-50: La sua ricostruzione e l'assistenza militare alleata*, Rome, 1989; Nuti, L., 'Gli alleati e le forze armate italiane, 1945-48', in Di Nolfo, E., Rainero, R., Vigezzi, B., (eds.), *L'Italia e la politica di potenza in Europa, 1945-50*, Milano, 1988.

<sup>30</sup>. Poggiolini, I., *Diplomazia della transizione: Gli alleati e il problema del trattato di pace italiano, 1945-47*, Firenze, 1990.

<sup>31</sup>. Sebastiani, P., *Laburisti inglesi e socialisti italiani*, Rome, 1983.

Italian state, a situation which left Italy according to David Ellwood, in a state 'of limited, political, economic, and military sovereignty ... [but] as it ended, stability and prosperity were offered from outside, as the beacons of the future...'<sup>32</sup> The work continues to the moment that Italy's entry to NATO and the Council of Europe had signalled that its international rehabilitation had become complete, at least within the Western World. It will endeavour to analyse the factors that influenced the evolution of British policy towards Italy such as pressures from the emerging Cold War; Britain's diminished power in the region; its desire to remain a major international player in the post WWII world and the need to deny Italy to the Italian Communists and the Soviet Union. It will seek to evaluate the impact that Italian domestic politics and Italian realities had on the conception and execution of British policy. As the Peace Treaty and its ramifications underscore many of the issues discussed it will not be treated in isolation but it will be raised as an integral part of the issues that it influenced.

The dissertation will endeavour to show that although it did not change the major tenets of British foreign policy, the Attlee government adopted a less harsh and more even policy towards Italy. Its policy differed materially from that of Churchill's wartime government's in two respects. It did not aim at keeping Italy weak in perpetuity nor did it seek to dominate it. Its aim was to reconstruct Italy in such a way as to make it: first, safe for British interests; second acceptable to its neighbours and the international community; and third, to provide it with the means of attaining internal and external stability. The aims of their involvement are indicated by the areas in which the British became interested, namely, the reconstruction of the Italian armed and police forces, the intervention in the April 1948 election, British attempts to neutralize the

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<sup>32</sup>. Ellwood, *Italy*, p. 241.

threat Yugoslavia posed for Italy, Italian inclusion in British inspired plans for European cooperation and British efforts to disassociate the First Italian Republic from its links with Mussolini's Italy by punishing those of its citizens that had been identified as war criminals by its neighbour countries.

The thesis will also confirm the trend identified by P. Hennessy and A. Arends that foreign policy making under Labour was not a collective process but the province of the Foreign Office.<sup>33</sup> In the case of Italy this trend was even more pronounced because of the existing framework of the wartime period and because Attlee showed only limited interest on Italian matters. The Cabinet was consulted only rarely on Italy and then only in general terms or on matters which were relatively anodyne for its members such as the Italian colonies, or when policy rubber-stamping was needed. The Foreign Office acted as the initiator and final arbiter of Britain's Italian policy since most issues regarding Italy were contentious and at times not conducive to either harmonious debate or unanimity. Thus, the Cabinet had no significant influence on policy towards Italy. In the case of Italy, Bevin falls in the second category of Foreign Secretary prototypes as identified by Donald Cameron Watt, that of the originator of policy and principal spokesman on matters of foreign affairs rather than merely that of the representative and facilitator of the Cabinet.<sup>34</sup> He showed this with the determined insistence he displayed over salvaging some of the vestiges of British power in Italy and in being a partner of the Americans in brokering Italy's future orientation. Bevin's policy aimed at ensuring that British access to Italy was blocked by neither the United States nor the Soviet

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<sup>33</sup>. Hennessy, P., and Arends, A., *Mr Attlee's Engine Room: Cabinet Committee Structure and the Labour Government, 1945-51*, Glasgow, 1983, cited in Warner, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>34</sup>. Watt, D.C., *Personalities and Policies*, London, 1965, Chapter 9; Bullock, op. cit., pp. 75-6; Roberts, F.K., 'Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary' in Ovendale (ed) *The Foreign Policy of the Labour Government, 1945-1951*, Leicester, 1984, p. 28.

Union. The Western Department was chiefly responsible for policy towards Italy but because of the variety and complexity of issues pertaining to Italy it decided policy in consultation with other geographical and specialist departments, namely, the Southern, Northern, Peace Making, Reconstruction, Information and Research Departments. The Labour Party, especially the party's Secretary and its International Department were also activated in the implementation of British policy towards Italy.

The thesis will attempt to establish that British policy was not determined by any residual and deep-seated anti-Italianism but based on efforts to promote British interests and plans in the postwar world. It is true that Foreign Office files for this period do not make politically correct reading and there is no doubt that some resentment towards Italy still lingered in the mid-1940s in the minds of British officials and politicians. Similarly, towards the end of the decade they were becoming tired with constant Italian complaints and the virulently anti-British campaigns of sections of the nationalist Italian press as to utter, by today's standards, some unacceptable opinions about the Italians. Often irritation with Italy's insistence on adopting the politics of pleading weakness<sup>35</sup> prompted comments that echoed the words of the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office during the Great War, Sir Eyre Crowe: 'the Italians have always threatened us with dire mishaps in their own country if we did not make concessions on questions of foreign policy'.<sup>36</sup> A typical example of this is the outburst of the head of the Western Department, C.A.E. Shuckburgh that 'we cannot for ever regard ourselves as patient (or impatient) psychiatrists treating

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<sup>35</sup>. Maier, C.S., 'Alliance and Autonomy: European Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives in the Truman Years', in Lacey, M.J., *The Truman Presidency*, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 290-1.

<sup>36</sup>. FO 371/79346/Z2335/10535/170, 15-3-1949, minutes by A.D.F. Pemberton-Pigott, Italian Section of Western Department, 7-3-1949 and Sir Eyre Crowe, 4-11-1919.



a not too amiable neurotic' but more often than not these comments were tempered by interjections such as that of the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office, Sir William Strang's, 'the austere English understatement chills the Italian to the core, we must avoid giving the impression that we do not mind what [they] think'.<sup>37</sup> However, what is evident is that despite its prejudices and frustrations Attlee's government and its officials not did allow such concerns to influence or hi-jack policy. The pursuit of the national interest remained the utmost concern of any British policy towards Italy.

The thesis is divided into five chapters which examine the principle areas of British involvement in Italian domestic and military affairs. The first chapter is examines British attempts to deal with Italy's war criminality in a manner which would promote stability in Italy and regional security. Chapter Two revolves around British attempts to rebuild the Italian armed and security forces to ensure that internal subversion did not succeed. The electoral triumph of the DC (*Democrazia Cristiana*) in April 1948 was secured with the aid of massive foreign intervention. British involvement in the Italian election and its aims is examined in Chapter Three. Chapters Four and Five centre on the international and European framework which emerged after the end of the war and British perceptions and planning for Italy's role within it.

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<sup>37</sup>. Ibid., Z4359/10535/170, 16-6-1949, minutes by Shuckburgh, 26-6-1949 and Strang, 30-6-1949.

## Chapter One

### British Policy towards the Prosecution of Italian War Criminals

The formulation of a policy on the prosecution of Italian war criminals was fraught with problems for Britain. The discharge of such a policy was influenced by two important objectives: first, to deliver Italy from the ruin Fascism had wreaked on its society, economy and political system, and second, to rehabilitate it with its neighbours and ex-enemies and ensure its security by punishing those who had initiated the War and perpetrated war crimes. The British needed to stabilise Italy quickly, neutralise the PCI and preserve an influence in the country. The countries with complaints against Italian war criminality, namely the UK, the US, Albania, France, Greece, Yugoslavia and Ethiopia sought justice and in effect, this meant the extradition of Italian citizens to face trial in the plaintiff countries.<sup>1</sup> The non-Armistice Powers, particularly Yugoslavia, sought to use Britain in its role as an Armistice power, as a means of channelling their demands *vis-à-vis* Italy and to secure the apprehension and extradition of Italian war criminals. The British government began to play the role of intermediary. Britain's own policy on Italian war crimes was geared towards extradition, but this rested on the premise of Anglo-American cooperation for its achievement. In this way, Britain would not be seen as the only power which pressed unpopular decisions on the reluctant Italians and thereby jeopardising its status with them.<sup>2</sup> The Americans, however, from early

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<sup>1</sup>. The United Nations War Crimes Commission, *History of the United Nations War Crimes Commission and the Development of the Laws of War*, London, 1948, (hereafter UNWCC), p. 350-2; FO 371/51024/U4463/29/73, 18-6-1945, secret, C. 110, UNWCC minutes, 62nd meeting, 23-5-1945; BBC, Timewatch, *Fascist Legacy: A Promise Unfulfilled*, Part: I, Elstree, 1989.

<sup>2</sup>. FO 371/51030/U5413/29/73, 13-7-45, top secret, telegram, FAN 591/FACS 259, CCS to Allied Commanders, 11-7-1945; top secret, telegram, NOD 978, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Cabinet Office (COS) to Joint Staff Mission (JSM), Washington 20-9-1945; FO 371/57519/U2338/70/73, 28-2-1946, letter, D.S. Scott-Fox, War Crimes Section of the Foreign Office (WCS) and head of the British War Crimes Executive, to Under-Secretary of State, WO, 16-3-1946.

on showed little interest in the issue. The American government's initial indifference towards Yugoslavia became outright hostility after the May crisis in Venezia Giulia and Tito's election in November 1945.<sup>3</sup> American reluctance exposed Britain and it soon became apparent that the matter was indeed, making Britain unpopular in Italy. Britain, thus, found itself in a dilemma about which country to support most, Italy or Yugoslavia and also between upholding justice or following a more pragmatic course.<sup>4</sup> British statesmen were eventually to conclude that they should not be the ones to enforce unpopular decisions on Italy unilaterally and by mid-1946 began looking to 'shuffle out' of direct responsibility for the setting in motion of Italian extraditions and 'hand-overs'.<sup>5</sup>

In this chapter, the process and the pressures which led British policy makers to amend their policy on 'hand-overs' and eventually decide to allow the Italian

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<sup>3</sup>. NARA RG 59, E 381, Lot Files 54D328, Boxes: 1-10, Folder: War Criminals, secret, telegram to SACMED, 30-4-1945; *ibid.*, secret, memorandum, Director of Civil Affairs Division, War Department, 3-10-1945; *ibid.*, secret, State Department Memorandum, 10-6-1947, CCS memorandum, 29-5-1947; NARA RG 43, E 390, Box 51, confidential, memorandum, undated; Rabel, R.G., *Between East and West: Trieste, the United States and the Cold War, 1941-54*, Durham, NC, 1988, pp. 52-73 and 89-91; Bohlen, C., *Witness to History, 1929-69*, New York, 1969, p. 253; FRUS, 1945, Vol. V, pp. 1229, 1233, 1266 and 1291-4; FRUS, 1946, Vol. II, p. 728; FRUS, 1946, Vol. VI., 869-70 and 887-88; FRUS, 1947, Vol. IV, 797-800.

<sup>4</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3031/70/73, 20-3-1946, minute by R.A. Beaumont, FO official and UK delegate at UNWCC and FO, 21-3-1946.

<sup>5</sup>. FO 371/57519/U349/70/73, 9-1-1946, secret, UNWCC circular, 'Extradition of War Criminals', 2-1-1946; *ibid.*, U2652/70/73, 9-1-1946, minutes by Sir J.R. Colville, Yugoslav Section of the Southern Department, FO, 15-3-1946, A. D. M. Ross, Italian Section of the Western Department, FO, 15-3-1946, Beaumont, 12-3-1946 and 18-3-1946, and Scott-Fox, 14-3-1946; secret, letter, GHQ.CMF, Lieutenant General, Commander in Chief to the Under Secretary of State, 26-2-1946; immediate, letter, Scott-Fox to Colonel Savill, WO, 18-3-1946; *ibid.*, U3031/70/73, 20-3-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 21-3-1946, W.E. Beckett, FO Legal Section, 22-3-1946, Ross, 25-3-1946; telegram, no. 273, Philip Broad, British Political Advisor, Allied Forces HQ (AFHQ), Caserta, to FO, 19-3-1946; important, telegram, no. 454, FO to Rome, 28-3-1946; important, telegram, no. 494, FO to Belgrade, 28-3-1946.

government to deal with the issue will be examined. It will be argued that far from conspiring to shield Italian war criminals,<sup>6</sup> Britain tried hard to ensure that some of them, at least, were brought to justice. Its failure to do so in the end was not due to lack of trying on its part but simply because alone, it could do very little to enforce its policy on 'hand-overs' effectively. In fact, Britain paid a price for its moral stance on the issue and jeopardized its relations with post-fascist Italy and which in the long run contributed to undermining its influence with that country. This was because Britain was not prepared to drop the idea of the inclusion of a war crimes clause from the final text of the Italian Peace Treaty.<sup>7</sup>

### **I. The Historical Background**

The existence of Italian war criminality had been acknowledged by the liberating forces as early as September 1943. The concept of retributive action against Italian war criminals was enshrined in Article 29 of the Long Armistice Terms which obliged the new Italian government to apprehend and surrender to the UN, Mussolini, his fascist associates and all persons who had been involved in, or were suspected of having been involved in 'war crimes' or 'analogous offences' against UN nationals.<sup>8</sup> The Revised Armistice Terms

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<sup>6</sup>. BBC, Timewatch, *Fascist Legacy: A Pledge Betrayed*, Part: II, Elstree, 1989.

<sup>7</sup>. FO 371/57659/U5686/4473/73, 29-5-1946, minutes by Scott-Fox, 25-5-1946 and Sir Basil Newton, Legal Section of the Foreign Office, 27-5-1946; letter, Scott-Fox to Colonel G.R. Bradshaw, Deputy Director of Personnel Services, (D.D.P.S.) at the WO, 29-5-1946; *ibid.*, U7090/4473/73, 11-9-1946, minutes by Scott-Fox, 29-8-1946 and C.L.S. Cope, UK delegation, Paris, 30-8-1946; FO 371/60607/ZM1950/1286/22, 11-6-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 61st meeting, 3-6-1946; FO 371/60711/ZM2371/1286/22, 8-7-1946, telegram, no. 1051, Sir Noel Charles, British Ambassador to Italy, to FO, 6-7-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2514/1286/22, 18-7-1946, confidential, despatch, no. 369, Charles to Bevin, 18-7-1946; minutes by Ross, 19-7-1946 and 24-7-1946 and Sir F. R. Hoyer-Millar, head of the Western Department, 19-7-1946.

<sup>8</sup>. Harris, C.R.S., *The Allied Administration of Italy, 1943-45*, London, 1957, pp. 106-8 and 131.

contained the same obligation.<sup>9</sup> Italian complicity in war crimes was unstated in the Moscow Declaration not because the conferees considered the Italians innocent of war crimes but simply because of a typographical error in which the word 'Italian' was omitted from the final draft of the declaration.<sup>10</sup> As a result of this omission, Article 29 of the Armistice and the relevant article of the Revised Armistice Terms became the legal cornerstones on which the apprehension and surrender of Italian war criminals were to be based. In addition to its involvement as a liberating power, Britain also found itself closely involved in the process of Italian war crimes detection, investigation and punishment through its membership of the United Nations War Crimes Commission (UNWCC).<sup>11</sup> This body had been founded in London in October 1943 at the instigation of the British government and was made up of all the UN members fighting against the Axis powers. It was the first machinery set up by the Allies to investigate war crime charges against the Axis and its collaborators.<sup>12</sup>

The first attempts made by the British to deal with aspects of Italian war criminality can be traced back to June 1944 when the British War Cabinet

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<sup>9</sup>. FRUS, 1945, Vol., V, pp. 1090-1; FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, p. 831.

<sup>10</sup>. FO 371/57520/U4331/70/73, 23-4-1946, minute by Scott-Fox, 26-4-1946. For the text of Moscow Declaration see Harris, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>11</sup>. UNWCC., op. cit., p. 374.

<sup>12</sup>. UNWCC, op. cit., pp. 2 and 5. The creation of the Commission was the culmination of Churchill's proposals to Roosevelt and it was based on the principles outlined in Eden's paper "The Treatment of War Criminals". The Commission's functions were defined in a statement by the Lord Chancellor on the 20 of March 1943 and they were: first, to carry out investigations into alleged war crimes and to attempt to identify the perpetrators; second, to report to member governments those cases in which it appeared that adequate evidence existed for prosecution; and third for each member government to undertake the obligation to set up a National Office whose function it would be to investigate, evaluate and record all available information relating to crimes committed on its territory against its nationals.

decided that it would treat only eight Italian *gerarch*i as major war criminals.<sup>13</sup> Due to the particularities of the Italian situation, the apprehension of these eight persons was not possible. They had either fled to the North with Mussolini or had been killed either in battle, or by the partisans.<sup>14</sup> Britain was concerned also that Italian war crimes ought to be limited to those committed during the Second World War and those committed in earlier conflicts be excluded.<sup>15</sup> The reasons behind this British position were manifold. First, there was a need to contain the scope of war crimes trials to manageable proportions.<sup>16</sup> Second, the War Cabinet had decided that those who had held high position in the Axis had to be legally made an example of and be treated in a different manner to other citizens and that their treatment should not leave any margins for any

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<sup>13</sup>. CAB 65/41, top secret, WM34(44), item: 4, 'War Criminals', 13-3-1944; CAB 65/42, top secret, WM83(44), item: 4, 'War Criminals', approved WP(44) 294 and WP(44)330, 28-6-1944; CAB 66/51, top secret, WP(44)330, memorandum by A. Eden, Foreign Secretary, 'Treatment of Major War Criminals', Annex II, List of Major Italian War Criminals, 16-6-1944; *ibid.*, top secret, WP(44)294, 2-6-1944; FO 371/51045/U5060/55/73, 26-6-1945, note on the List of Major Italian War Criminals forming 'Annex II' of War Cabinet paper, WP(44)330, 16-7-1944; minutes by P.H. Dean, War Crimes Section, 2-7-1945, Hoyer-Millar, 26-6-1945, Sir Oliver Harvey, Superintending Under-Secretary of the Western Department of the FO, 27-6-1945. Among them was General Rodolfo Graziani who played a prominent role in the Salò Republic regime and went on to compound his already deplorable record by perpetrating war crimes against his own countrymen.

<sup>14</sup>. *Ibid.*; FO 371/51032/U5941/29/73, 3-8-1945, secret, UNWCC, C. 135, 16-7-1945; FO 371/51033/U6120/29/73, 9-8-1945, UNWCC list, no. 12, July 1945.

<sup>15</sup>. FO 371/51044/U2108/55/73, 24-3-1945, minutes by J.C. Wardrop, 3-4-1945, Reconstruction Department of the FO and J.G. Ward, acting head of Reconstruction Department, 27-4-1945; FO 371/57556/U6562/126/73, letter, no. 134, Faquahar, Addis Ababa to FO, 3-9-1946; FO 371/57556/U5985/126/73, 19-7-1946, secret, telegram, no. F 67661, AFHQ to WO, 13-6-1946; *ibid.*, U6560/126/73, 6-8-1946, doc. C. 217, UNWCC report presented by Committee III on the question on the jurisdiction of the UNWCC over war crimes committed in Ethiopia during the Italo-Abyssinian War, 31-7-1946, letter, Ambaye Wolde Mariam, Acting Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Imperial Ethiopian Government to FO, 22-7-1946; CAB 66/57, WP(44)648, memorandum by Eden, 4-11-1944; CAB 65/44, WM152(44), approved WP(44)648, 21-11-1944; CAB 66/57, WP(44)648, memorandum by Eden, 4-11-1944; CAB 65/44, WM152(44), approved WP(44)648, 21-11-1944.

<sup>16</sup>. CAB 65/42, WM83(44), item 4: War Criminals, 28-6-1944.

revisionist claims.<sup>17</sup> The spectre of the trials of German war criminals after the end of the Great War which had collapsed and had created embarrassment and ridicule for the *Entente* prosecuting authorities had made the British cautious and apprehensive of tying themselves to promises that could prove impossible to keep, or which could produce undesirable consequences.<sup>18</sup> Third, British statesmen feared that if Ethiopia and Albania were accepted into the UNWCC, General Badoglio, Italy's first prime minister after its unconditional surrender to the Allies, would eventually be implicated and this could undermine the whole edifice of 'post-fascist' Italy.<sup>19</sup> Fourth, the Allied governments were concerned that whilst the war was still proceeding, the immediate arrest of suspected war criminals would have severe implications for Allied POWs whose lives could be endangered by reprisals.<sup>20</sup> Fifth, there were the problems which arose from Italy's distinctive position in being both an ex-enemy and a co-belligerent power. Thus, the UNWCC lists of alleged Italian war criminals contained the names of people who had collaborated with the Allied Forces at the time of the liberation of Italy.<sup>21</sup> For both the British and the American governments the goal of ending the war as swiftly as possible

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<sup>17</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>. Bower, T., *Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, America and the Purging of Nazi Germany - A Pledge Betrayed*, London, 1981, pp. 28-32 and 48-50.

<sup>19</sup>. Domenico, R.P., *Italian Fascists on Trial, 1943-1948*, Chapel Hill, 1991, pp. 24; Palumbo, M., 'Genocidio all' Italiana', *Epoca*, 17-1-1988; UNWCC., op. cit., pp. 189-90 and 67-70; FO 371/51044/U2108/55/73, 24-3-1945, minutes by Wardrop, 3-4-1945 and Ward, 27-4-1945; *ibid.*, U2108/55/73, 24-3-1945, minutes by Wardrop, 3-4-1945 and Ward, 27-4-1945; *ibid.*, U2404/ 55/73, 4-4-1945, minute by Wardrop, 4-4-1945; letter, AFHQ to FO, 3-4-1945.

<sup>20</sup>. FO 371/51018/U3095/29/73, 25-4-1945, JSM 733, top secret, Interdepartmental Committee on War Crimes, minutes, 24-4-1945; directive, JSM 733, approved on 26-4-1945; COS(45)108th meeting, 24-4-1945; FO 371/51017/U2986/29/73, 21-4-1945, APW(45)58, secret, 19-4-45.

<sup>21</sup>. Ibid.



eclipsed all other concerns.<sup>22</sup> The successful conclusion of the war in the Italian theatre was deemed to be dependent on the docility of the *Regno del Sud* and on its total adherence to the terms King Victor Emmanuel and Badoglio had signed.<sup>23</sup> Thus, the punishment of Italian war criminality assumed a low priority which the Armistice powers intended to deal with after the war was over.<sup>24</sup>

The limited and selective approach Churchill's wartime Cabinet had intended to apply towards punishing Italian war criminality had to be abandoned because of the plethora of claims registered with the UNWWC against Italy.<sup>25</sup> By the spring of 1945, the Allies had liberated most of the areas in which alleged Italian war crimes had occurred. France, Greece and Yugoslavia sought justice by lodging their claims against Germany and Italy with the United Nations War Crimes Commission. France and Greece tended to regard their grievances against Germany as being of higher priority than those against Italy. For the French government, hunting down German war criminals was far more important than any grievances it harboured against Italy. The French did attempt to extradite alleged Italian war criminals, but despite occasional frustrations with their Anglo-American Allies, they did not press their claims

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<sup>22</sup>. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, 1944-45, Vol. 408, Col. 1359, London, 1945, parliamentary question by Tom E.N. Driberg, MP for Maldon, and answer by Anthony Eden, Foreign Secretary, 28-2-1945; FO 371/51013/U1565/29/73, 5-3-1945, telegram, no. 79, FO to Rome, 1-3-1945; *ibid.*, U1687/29/73, 10-3-1945, minute by Wardrop, 9-3-1945; FO 371/51014/U1849/29/73, 16-3-1945, minutes by P.S. Falla, Reconstruction Department of the FO, 12-3-1945 and Wardrop, 10-3-1945.

<sup>23</sup>. Domenico, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-34; Ellwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-126 and 149-198, *passim*; Miller, *op. cit.*, pp.133-7 and 159-60.

<sup>24</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>. UNWCC., *op. cit.*, p. 350.

against Italy resolutely.<sup>26</sup> Greece was also a founding member of the UNWCC and as early as September 1944, the Greek government had furnished the Allied Control Commission with a list of Italians who had perpetrated a number of serious war crimes against Greek nationals.<sup>27</sup> However, war crimes punishment at this stage was not an imperative priority for a Greek government embroiled in a civil war. The reluctance of Greece to deal with the issue can be gleaned from the fact that the Greek National Office of War Crimes was only established in June 1945.<sup>28</sup> K. Stavropoulos, Greece's representative at the UNWCC, was a vehement anti-communist. He viewed most war crimes claims as communist fabrications and never once took an independent line from Britain on the issue.<sup>29</sup> This was so even in cases where Greek interests in war crimes matters would have been better served by siding with Yugoslavia.

Tito's government, unlike other Continental governments, was not prepared to distinguish between Germans and Italians and was determined to seek out with

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<sup>26</sup>. FO 371/57659/U5780/4473/73, 31-5-1946, immediate, secret, telegram, no. 276, Paris to FO, 30-1-1946; FO 371/57521/U7950/70/73, 1-11-1946, minutes of Allied Control Council, Italy: ACI's 58th meeting held on 25-10-1946, item: War Criminals; WO 310/176, secret, undated, FX 72714, AFHQ to Allied Commission, (ALCOM), Rome; *ibid.*, secret, telegram, no. 5307, Ellery Stone, Allied Commissioner, to AFHQ, 16-10-1945; *ibid.*, confidential, letter, Shapcott, Judge Advocate General's Office, 6-9-1945; FO 371/57659/U5780/4473/73, 31-5-1946, immediate, secret, telegram, no. 276, Paris to FO, 30-1-1946.

<sup>27</sup>. FO 371/51044/U172/55/73, 8-1-45, minutes by Wardrop, 13-1-1945, Viscount Hood, Reconstruction Department of the FO, 16-1-1945, Dean, 19-1-1945, Wardrop, 20-1-1945; letter by Sargent to the Greek Ambassador to the UK, 2-2-1945; Historical Archive of the Greek Foreign Ministry, 1945.

<sup>28</sup>. FO 371/51033/U6168/55/73, 11-8-1945, Greek Government Gazette, Part I, no. 145, Law no. 384, Archbishop Damaskinos, the Greek Prime Minister, 8-6-45; Historical Archive of the Greek Foreign Ministry, 1945.

<sup>29</sup>. Palumbo, M., *The Waldheim Files: Myth and Reality*, London, 1988, pp. 18-9; FO 371/51025/U4509/29/73, 9-6-1945, secret, C 117, UNWCC minutes, 2-6-1945; FO 371/51009-51046, *passim*; WO 310/180, 16000/22/A3, confidential, letter, CHQ. CMF, to Under Secretary of State, War Office, 28-11-46; *ibid.*, Annexure, A 12, Italian War Crimes in Greece; Historical Archive of the Greek Foreign Ministry, 1945.

equal vigour all those whom it had identified as being war criminals, be they Germans, Italians or 'Quislings'.<sup>30</sup> The Yugoslav government accused Italy of crimes against humanity as well as war crimes against peace and the rules and customs of war.<sup>31</sup> It proved to be the most insistent in wanting to see Italian war criminals not only tried and prosecuted, but tried before its own courts.<sup>32</sup> Yugoslavia's claims and demands caused major complications for British policy towards Italy in the immediate postwar period and undermined the preferred British approach of carefully selected targets as subjects for war crimes investigations.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, they created an invidious dilemma for Britain in that the satisfaction these demands would alienate Italy and their outright rejection would enrage Yugoslavia to such a degree as to transform it into a greater menace to the region.<sup>34</sup>

The case for Italian war criminality, as presented by Yugoslavia, was a strong one, centring around the maltreatment of Yugoslav civilians during the Italian

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<sup>30</sup>. United Nations War Crimes Commission, *Law Reports of Trials of War Criminals*, Vol. XV, London, 1949, pp. 202-9; Yugoslav State Official Publication, *Italian War Crimes in Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1945, passim; FO 371/51023/U4210/29/73, 1-6-1945, secret, doc. C 110, UNWCC minutes, proposal by R. Zivković, Yugoslavia's representative at the UNWCC, re.: establishment of an Agency attached to the ACC in Italy 14-5-1945; FO 371/51023/U4229/29/73, 1-6-1945, secret, doc. C 115, UNWCC minutes, 24-5-1945 and record of UNWCC Conference of 6-5-1945; FO 371/57523/70/73, 9-8-1946, 'Report on Italian War Crimes in Yugoslavia and its People', prepared by the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia State Commission for the investigation of War Crimes, Belgrade, 1946.

<sup>31</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>. UNWCC, op. cit., pp. 350-1.

<sup>33</sup>. CAB 65/42, WM83(44), item 4: War Criminals, 28-6-1944; FO 371/51018/U3095/29/73, 25-4-1945, JSM 733, top secret, Interdepartmental Committee on War Crimes, minutes, 24-4-1945; directive, JSM 733, approved on 26-4-1945; COS(45)108th meeting, 24-4-1945; FO 371/51017/U2986/29/73, 21-4-1945, APW(45)58, secret, 19-4-45.

<sup>34</sup>. Lane, A.J., 'Coming to Terms with Tito: Britain and Yugoslavia, 1945-49' in Aldrich, R.J., and Hopkins, M. F., (eds), *Intelligence, Defence and Diplomacy: British Policy in the Postwar World*, London, 1994, p. 14.

occupation.<sup>35</sup> After its assault on Yugoslavia in 1941, Italy had annexed parts of Slovenia and the Dalmatian coast and had occupied an area of the Adriatic coast which consisted of parts of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It also established a protectorate over Montenegro and incorporated parts of southern Yugoslavia into its Albanian protectorate.<sup>36</sup> Initially, the Italian occupation authorities were deeply shocked when they came face to face with the brutality the Ustaši had displayed towards Serbs, Jews and Gypsies and they decided to take a more direct approach in the running of the territories they had annexed.<sup>37</sup> The Italians, however, found it extremely difficult to subdue these areas and in attempting to exercise control, the Italian armed forces and the occupation authorities frequently employed terror and cruelty.<sup>38</sup> Mass arrests, mass executions, race oppression, the burning of villages, massacres of civilians, the expropriation and looting of properties, internment in concentration camps and the use of slave labour were some of the means employed by the invaders in their efforts to drive a wedge between the civilian

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<sup>35</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>. Singleton, F., *Twentieth Century Yugoslavia*, London, 1976, p. 87; Tomasevich, J. *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-45: The Chetniks*, Stanford, 1975, pp.91-5; Clissold, S., *A Short History of Yugoslavia: From Early Times to 1966*, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 209-10; Pavlowitch, S.K., 'The Second World War in Yugoslavia: An Imaginary Debate', *European Studies Review*, Vol. VII, 1981, pp. 543-53. Branko, P., *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1985, passim; *Italian War Crimes in Yugoslavia*, op. cit., pp. 52-81; FRUS, 1947, Vol. IV, pp. 797-800.

<sup>37</sup>. Milazzo, M.J., *The Chetnik Movement and the Yugoslav Resistance*, Baltimore, 1975, pp. 52-5; Trew, S., *Britain, Mihailović and the Chetniks, 1941-2*, London, 1998, pp. 13-4; Stato Maggiore dell' Esercito - Ufficio Storico, Loi, S., (ed), *Le operazioni delle unità italiane in Jugoslavia, 1941-43: narrazione, documenti*, Roma, 1978.

<sup>38</sup>. Palumbo, M., 'Genocidio all' Italiana', *Epoca*, 17-1-1988; Tomasevich, op. cit., pp. 101-4; BBC, Timewatch, *Fascist Legacy: A Promise Unfulfilled*, Part: I, Elstree, 1989.

population and the partisans and to consolidate Italian control.<sup>39</sup>

Some Italian commanders in Yugoslavia had been linked to the issuing of particularly harsh and inhumane orders for dealing with the Yugoslav population. General Mario Roatta, whose nickname in Yugoslavia was 'beast', issued a comprehensive order in March 1942, the notorious 'C 3', which was directed against the civilian population and which characterised the whole civilian population as potential supporters of the partisans.<sup>40</sup> Roatta was held personally responsible for the destruction of 800 villages, the forcible removal of 35,000 persons to concentration camps in Italy, the murder by starvation of 4,500 hostages in an Italian camp in Yugoslavia and the shooting of 1000 hostages in Italian custody.<sup>41</sup> Most of these war crimes had been perpetrated during the mopping up operations in the winter of 1942-43, by which time the Balkan theatre of war had become one of the most barbaric and brutal of the Second World War.<sup>42</sup> General Taddeo Orlando, in keeping with the spirit of the original Roatta circular 'C 3', issued an order under which only the wounded, along with women and men under the age of eighteen should be handed over to tribunals. All others arrested by Italian authorities should be 'immediately shot on the spot'.<sup>43</sup> In May 1942, General Robotti issued an order for the

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<sup>39</sup>. Ibid.; Djilas, M., *Wartime: With Tito and the Partisans*, London, 1980, pp. 26, 38, 74 and 124; *Italian War Crimes in Yugoslavia*, op. cit., passim.

<sup>40</sup>. Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>41</sup>. FO 371/51044/U2584/55/73, 10-4-1945, articles in the *Daily Herald* and the *Daily Worker*, 10-4-1945; FO 371/51046/U9723/55/73, 6-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 2701, FO to Rome, 17-12-1945.

<sup>42</sup>. Djilas, op. cit., pp. 215 and 3-91, passim; Deakin, F.W., *The Embattled Mountain*, Oxford, 1971, pp. 1-32; Lindsay, F., *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito's Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia*, Stanford, 1993, pp. 36-8.

<sup>43</sup>. *Italian War Crimes in Yugoslavia*, op. cit., p. 61.

execution of hostages if those guilty of any violent act against the Italian armed forces were not found within 48 hours.<sup>44</sup> The military Governor of Montenegro, General Alessandro Pirzio-Biroli, who was described by Djilas as an 'energetic and cruel man', issued a handbook to the Italian armed forces fighting in Montenegro commanding them to 'kill, shoot, burn and destroy these people'.<sup>45</sup>

As the Communist-led resistance in the occupied areas grew, the politics of occupation and oppression became embroiled in the politics of civil war and revolution. Italy resorted to a policy of divide and rule and of exploiting to the full the age-old ethnic and religious tensions existing in the area.<sup>46</sup> The occupation forces utilised the virulently nationalistic Croatian Ustaši faction headed by Ante Pavelić and the ultra-nationalistic and anti-communist Serbian Četniks under Draža Mihailović in their attempt to 'pacify' the area.<sup>47</sup> Concerted efforts were also made to erode a Yugoslav national identity by uprooting and destroying national and cultural institutions and to 'italianize' those areas of Yugoslavia which the Italian Fascist state claimed as its own. The methods used to achieve these ends included the imposition of the Italian language on south Slavic populations, the banning of native language newspapers, the supervision of education, mass conversions of non-Catholic populations to the Roman Catholic faith and the 'italianization' of Slavic surnames.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>. Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>45</sup>. Djilas, op. cit., pp. 26, 38 and 74; Dedijer, V., *The Wartime Diaries of Vladimir Dedijer, Vol. 1: From 6 April 1941 to 27 November 1942*, Michigan, 1990, pp. 146-7.

<sup>46</sup>. Singleton, op. cit., pp. 86-7.

<sup>47</sup>. Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 19-22; Singleton, op. cit., pp. 86-96; Deakin, op. cit., 37, 40, passim; Clissold, S., *Whirlwind: An Account of Marshal Tito's Rise to Power*, London, 1947, pp. 9-116, passim; Djilas, op. cit., 3-216, passim; Milazzo, op. cit., pp. 52-5; Tomasevich, op. cit., pp. 105-8, 210-2 and 256-61.

<sup>48</sup>. UNWCC., op. cit., p. 488.

The Yugoslav State Commission for the 'investigation of the crimes of the invaders and their assistants', the National Office of the UNWCC in Yugoslavia, estimated that between 1940 and 1943, two hundred Italian concentration camps had been set up in Yugoslavia, Albania and Italy and that approximately 143,000 Yugoslavs had been interned in these camps. The lack of food and sanitation had rapidly transformed them into death-camps.<sup>49</sup> As far as the Yugoslavs were concerned, the Italians did not behave any better as occupiers than had the Germans and during this period it is estimated that 1.5 m<sup>50</sup> to 1.75 m Yugoslavs died<sup>51</sup> as the result of Italian and German occupation. This massive toll amounted to nearly 11% of the pre-war population of Yugoslavia.<sup>52</sup>

## **II. Meting out Justice in an Uncertain World**

From late 1944 onwards, with Italy as yet not completely liberated, the Yugoslav government embarked on a concerted effort to pressure the UNWCC and the Armistice Powers to assist them in carrying out its programme of war crimes trials. As early as October and November 1944, it submitted proposals to the Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) designed to speed up the process of getting its hands on alleged Italian war criminals. The Yugoslavs suggested that they send a mission to Italy to investigate the evidence relating to suspected Italian war crimes committed against Yugoslav nationals. The Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) instructed the AFHQ to approve the Yugoslav proposal because they were concerned that if war crimes were not investigated

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<sup>49</sup>. BBC, Timewatch, *Fascist Legacy: A Promise Unfulfilled*, Part: I, Elstree, 1989; Palumbo, M., 'Genocidio all' Italiana', *Epoca*, 17-1-1988.

<sup>50</sup>. FO 371/51044/U2584/55/73, 10-4-1945, articles in the *Daily Herald* and the *Daily Worker*, 10-4-1945; FO 371/51046/U9723/55/73, 6-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2701, FO to Rome, 17-12-1945.

<sup>51</sup>. Singleton, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>52</sup>. Ibid.



promptly, then the perpetrators could disappear or obstruct the course of justice.<sup>53</sup> This arrangement, however, was to be overtaken by developments in the European theatre of operations and which resulted in delay.<sup>54</sup>

The early months of 1945 saw renewed fighting in Italy and the issue of war crimes and the Yugoslav mission to Italy was put on the back burner. To the Yugoslavs, this meant that they could not pursue their programme of punishing war criminals as quickly as they wished. They also became disaffected with the structural shortcomings of the UNWCC which had a purely consultative function<sup>55</sup> and did not include the USSR.<sup>56</sup> As a result of their exclusion, the

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<sup>53</sup>. FO 371/51009/U123/29/73, 6-1-45, confidential, telegram, TAM 413, CCS to Field Marshal H. Alexander, SACMED, 4-1-1945; WO 204/2191, confidential, memorandum by Broad, 12-3-1945.

<sup>54</sup>. FO 371/51014/U2007/29/73, 22-3-1945, Enclosure, confidential, AFHQ, TAM 413, 12-3-45; GEN 59/5, Interdepartmental Committee on War Crimes, Surrender of War Criminals, Annex, 10-4-1945; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 800-801.2, Box: 118, top secret, CCS to AFHQ, 5-4-1945.

<sup>55</sup>. UNWCC, op. cit., p. 109-28; Bower, op. cit., p. 41; PREM 4, 110/10, 6-7-1942; WO 32/10790, 18-5-1942. The UNWCC could submit recommendations and compile lists of names of persons against whom prima facie evidence of war criminality existed, but it did not have the necessary executive powers invested in it to carry out its tasks successfully. It also lacked direct detection powers which meant that the UNWCC had to rely entirely 'upon the good faith, accuracy and diligence of the various member governments in presenting bona fide war crimes'.

<sup>56</sup>. UNWCC, op. cit., pp. 113; Bower, op. cit., pp. 50-58 FO 371/51015/U2089/29/73, 24-3-1945, Annex C, brief for the Lord Chancellor prepared by Ward, 15-3-1945. A further difficulty for the Commission was that the Soviet Union was not a member. The USSR had stayed outside the UNWCC because of an initial misunderstanding and subsequently because it had insisted upon an impossibly large representation. The Soviets wanted seven Soviet republics - Ukraine, Estonia, Byelorussia, Moldavia, Lithuania, Latvia and the Karelo-Finnish Republic - to be represented. This was unacceptable to the British. A decision to agree to the Soviet Union's wishes and include the Baltic states would have been tantamount to a *de facto* Western recognition of the position of those republics that had fallen into Soviet control after the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact. Further attempts by Britain and the UNWCC to entice the Soviet Union foundered again on this obstacle. As a result of their exclusion, the Soviets more often than not adopted an obstructive attitude towards the work of the UNWCC and did not recognize the legitimacy of its authority.

Soviets more often than not adopted an obstructive attitude towards the work of the UNWCC and did not recognize the legitimacy of its authority. They believed that war crimes related matters ought to be governed by the Moscow Declaration and dealt with through the diplomatic channels of the 'Big Three' and within the European Advisory Council.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the ability of the UNWCC to discharge its duties was hampered because of members' concerns that any decision the body took could be viewed with suspicion by the Soviet Union.<sup>58</sup> Exclusion also allowed the USSR to act as a loose cannon. There were instances when the Soviets created mischief and attempted to embarrass their allies in the UNWCC. Articles appeared in *Izvestiya* claiming that certain circles in the West had employed delaying tactics on war crimes. The case of Italy was frequently and prominently highlighted. Such tactics enabled the Soviets to score points with world public opinion against their Western allies and made the Yugoslavs suspicious that the UNWCC could not carry out its work effectively.<sup>59</sup> Soon, they manifested their frustration and this began to create problems and uneasiness at Caserta. The names of Italians alleged to have committed war crimes against nationals of Yugoslavia were broadcast over 'Radio Free Yugoslavia';<sup>60</sup> articles recounting Italian wartime atrocities appeared in the Belgrade political journals *Borisa* and *Politika*.<sup>61</sup> Dusan

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<sup>57</sup>. FO 371/51014/U1859/29/73, 16-3-45, minutes by R.J.M. Wilson, Western Department, 23-3-1945, Wardrop, 15-3-1945, 28-3-45, W.D. Allen, Northern Department of FO, 3-4-1945, and Dean, 2-4-1945.

<sup>58</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>. FO 371/51013/U1687/29/73, 10-3-1945, Soviet Monitor, Radio Bulletins from USSR, issued by the TASS Agency, 6-3-1945; FO 371/51023/U4276/29/73, 3-6-1945, telegram, no. 2186, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, British Ambassador to the Soviet Union, to FO, 2-6-1945; *Izvestiya*, article, 1-6-1945.

<sup>60</sup>. FO 371/51044/U254/55/73, 9-1-1945, letter, no. 61, Charles, Rome to FO, Free Yugoslav Radio broadcast: 'General Orlando et. al', 9-1-1945.

<sup>61</sup>. FO 371/51044/U1025/55/73, 14-2-1945, telegram, no. 175, Belgrade to FO, (translation of articles in *Borisa* and *Politika*), 13-2-1945; *ibid.*, U944/55/73, 9-2-1945, telegram, no. 143, Belgrade to FO, 3-2-1945.

Nedeljković, the President of the Yugoslav War Crimes Commission, publicly requested the extradition of Roatta to face trial at the scene of his crimes.<sup>62</sup> Field Marshal Harold Alexander, the Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean (SACMED), found that the issue of war crimes had begun suddenly to intrude into his normal day-to-day relations with the Italian armed forces. General Taddeo Orlando, a name frequently cited by the Yugoslavs in connection with atrocities, was now in command of the Carabinieri in the Rome area. Alexander, thus, requested instructions from London how to approach such situations.<sup>63</sup>

As the whole issue carried a raft of political implications, the Armistice and Post War Committee of the Cabinet (APW) whose remit covered post-hostilities issues and by extension the treatment of war criminals, passed the matter on to the Foreign Office which in November 1944 had been given by the War Cabinet the responsibility for formulating policy on war crimes related issues.<sup>64</sup> The Foreign Office was asked by the APW to consider if any special reservations should be applicable in the case of Italy. After careful consideration of the issue the Western Department and the War Crimes

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<sup>62</sup>. FO 371/51044/U994/55/73, 9-2-1945, telegram, no. 143, Belgrade to FO, 4-2-1945. Roatta was a prisoner of the Allies at this stage and he was awaiting trial.

<sup>63</sup>. FO 371/51018/U3095/29/73, 25-4-1945, top secret, Interdepartmental Committee on War Crimes, minutes, 24-4-1945; directive, JSM 733, approved on 26-4-1945; FO 371/51018/U3182/29/73, 28-4-1945, APW(45)58, item 10, War Crimes in the Mediterranean area, 26-4-1945; FO 371/51019/U3354/29/73, 2-5-1945, secret, telegram, F 63548, AFHQ (Alexander) to WO, 21-4-1945; FO 371/51044/U254/55, 9-1-45, telegram, no. 61, Charles to FO, 9-1-1945; *ibid.*, U352/55/73, 15-1-1945, important, telegram, no. 83, Macmillan, Resident Minister, Central Mediterranean to FO, 14-1-1945; minutes by Hood, 16-1-1945, and Dean, 16-1-1945; immediate, telegram, no. 308, FO to Macmillan, Caserta, 19-1-1945; *ibid.*, U490/55/73, 20-1-45, secret, telegram, no. 131, Charles to FO, 19-1-1945; CAB 79/32, COS(45)108th meeting, 24-4-1945; Macmillan, *op. cit.*, p. 645.

<sup>64</sup>. CAB 66/57, WP(44)648, memorandum by A. Eden, 4-11-1944; CAB 65/44, WM152(44), 21-11-1944.

Section of the Foreign Office concluded that they had no objections to the arrest of alleged Italian war criminals, barring of course the cases of those who had collaborated with the British authorities. The Foreign Office thus, informed the APW that collaboration cases were the only cases on which it should be notified in the future and that it could not see any need for further consultation.<sup>65</sup> From the Foreign Office's point of view, one which viewed Yugoslav claims against Italian war criminals with a degree of sympathy, the longer the issue was allowed to fester the more it would hamper its attempts to stabilise Italy.<sup>66</sup> It was also worried that any delays in this area would expose Britain to charges of bad faith and dilatoriness<sup>67</sup> and thus it hoped that 'the War Office would take the bit between the teeth and issue instructions to go ahead and to act on the UNWCC lists at once'.<sup>68</sup>

The War Office, to which the War Cabinet had entrusted the actual implementation of war crimes related policy<sup>69</sup> was displeased with its brief of apprehending war criminals and was at times obstructive. It was already pressed for resources and regarded this obligation as a serious defeat for its long held position that it should not assume any responsibilities which would

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<sup>65</sup>. FO 371/51019/U3354/29/73, 2-5-1945, minute by Wardrop, 28-4-1945.

<sup>66</sup>. FO 371/51018/U3182/29/73, 28-4-1945, APW(45)58, item 10, War Crimes in the Mediterranean area, 26-4-1945; FO 371/51019/U3354/29/73, 2-5-1945, minutes by Wardrop, 28-4-1945 and Dean, 30-4-1945.

<sup>67</sup>. FO 371/51018/U3182/29/73, 28-4-1945, APW(45)58, item 10, War Crimes in the Mediterranean area, 26-4-1945; FO 371/51019/U3319/29/73, 1-5-1945, minute by Dean, 27-4-1945; *ibid.*, U3354/29/73, 2-5-1945, minutes by Dean, 30-4-1945 and Wardrop, 28-4-1945.

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

<sup>69</sup>. CAB 66/57, WP(44)648, memorandum by Eden, 4-11-1944; CAB 65/44, WM152(44), approved WP(44)648, 21-11-1944.

not aid the war effort directly.<sup>70</sup> Thus, it opted for delaying tactics. It decided to await a directive from the CCS and instructed Alexander not to take any action until he had received it.<sup>71</sup> The Foreign Office thought that there was nothing worse than the indifference the War Office and the AFHQ were displaying and thus, due to their tardiness, it had to acquiesce reluctantly in adopting a more 'hands on' approach to war crimes related matters at a time when its resources were similarly overstretched.<sup>72</sup>

During this period, the British government also found itself facing mounting pressure from the Press and Parliament to punish Italian war criminals. A series of newspaper articles in publications as diverse as the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Herald* vividly described the horrors of the Italian occupation in Yugoslavia and highlighted the fact that 'it [was] an indictment of the Italians as much as of the Germans that terrorism became an instrument of policy'.<sup>73</sup> Pressure from Members of Parliament also increased. The government succeeded in suppressing most of the questions

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<sup>70</sup>. FO 371/51010/U564/29/73, 24-1-1945, letter, Sir F. Bovenschen, Permanent Under-Secretary, WO, to Sir A. Cadogan, Permanent Under-Secretary, FO, 18-1-1945; letter, Cadogan to Bovenschen, 24-1-1945; letter, Sir W. Malkin, FO Legal Section, to Sir Thomas Barnes, the Treasury Solicitor, 10-2-1945; letter, N.B. Ronald, Superintending Under-Secretary, Reconstruction Department of the FO, to Sir Edward Bridges, Secretary to the War Cabinet, 5-2-1945; WO 32/11729, letter, Cadogan to Bovenschen, 24-1-1945; letter, Bovenschen to Cadogan, 16-3-1945; letter, Cadogan to Bovenschen, 23-2-1945.

<sup>71</sup>. FO 371/51019/U3392/29/73, 3-5-1945, top secret, telegram, no. 90066, WO to AFHQ, 30-4-1945.

<sup>72</sup>. FO 371/51018/U3182/29/73, 28-4-1945, APW(45)58, item 10, War Crimes in the Mediterranean area, 26-4-1945; FO 371/51019/U3319/29/73, 1-5-1945, minute by Dean, 27-4-1945; *ibid.*, U3354/29/73, 2-5-1945, minutes by Dean, 30-4-1945, and, Wardrop, 28-4-1945; FO 371/51024/U4418/29/73, 7-6-1945, letter, FO to Rome, 7-6-1945.

<sup>73</sup>. FO 371/51044/U2583/55/73, 10-4-1945, article in *The Daily Telegraph*, 6-4-1945; FO 371/51044/U2584/55/73, 6-4-1945, articles in the *Daily Herald* and the *Daily Worker*, 6-4-1945; *ibid.*, article in the *Manchester Guardian*, 6-4-1945.

filed in the House of Commons by intimating to MPs that no measures would be taken which could put the lives of British POWs in jeopardy through reprisals from the Germans and the Italians.<sup>74</sup> In some cases this tactic worked. Irene Ward, the MP for Wallsend, filed parliamentary questions on two occasions but she was pressured on each occasion to drop them and await the end of the war in Europe to air her concerns about delays in punishing Italian war criminals.<sup>75</sup> Others, however, such as Tom Driberg, the MP for Maldon, and M. Carver, the MP for Howdenshire, were not daunted and proceeded to put their questions to Parliament on the policy of the British government towards the punishment of Italian war criminals.<sup>76</sup>

At the conclusion of the war, the Yugoslavs renewed their efforts.<sup>77</sup> These were marred by the unfortunate events at Venezia-Giulia in May-June 1945 which culminated in the Yugoslav occupation of Trieste and which led the Americans in particular, to regard Tito as nothing more than Stalin's advanced pawn. The Americans interpreted Yugoslav initiatives to obtain extraditions merely as propaganda attempts to discredit Italy with world opinion and they adopted an

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<sup>74</sup>. FO 371/51044/U3023/55/73, 24-4-1945, minutes by Ward and Wardrop, 10-4-1945.

<sup>75</sup>. Ibid.; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, 1944-45, Vol. 410, Col. 2438, London, 1945, parliamentary questions by I.M.B. Ward, MP for Wallsend, and Viscountess Astor, MP for Sutton, Plymouth, 22-5-1945; FO 371/51010/U460/29/73, 19-1-1945, letter, WO to Malkin, 16-1-1945.

<sup>76</sup>. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 1944-45, Vol. 408, Col. 1359, London, 1945, text of parliamentary question by Tom E.N. Driberg, MP and answer by Anthony Eden, 28-2-1945; FO 371/51013/U1565/29/73, 5-3-1945, telegram, no. 79, FO to Rome, 1-3-1945; *ibid.*, U1687/29/73, 10-3-1945, minute by Wardrop, 9-3-1945; FO 371/51014/U1849/29/73, 16-3-1945, minutes by Falla, 12-3-1945 and Wardrop, 10-3-1945.

<sup>77</sup>. UNWCC., *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 112, 120 and 482.

obstructive attitude towards Yugoslav war crime claims against Italy.<sup>78</sup> It was in this climate that Yugoslavia launched a major offensive through the UNWCC. In May 1945, Dr. Radomir Zivković, the Yugoslav representative, brought the issue of Italian war criminality to the centre stage of UNWCC deliberations. He was aided by the revulsion felt world-wide by the discovery of the horrors of Belsen, Buchenwald and Dachau. He described Italy as second only to Germany in the number of war crimes committed against UN nationals and he stressed that the crimes committed by the Italian armed forces and occupation authorities against the nationals of Yugoslavia, France, Greece and Albania did not fall short in brutality to the crimes committed by the Germans in the death camps. Zivković's emotional and moving presentation ended with the statement that the primary task of Yugoslav policy was the punishment of war criminals.<sup>79</sup> No one was left in any doubt about the determination of the Yugoslav government to see Italian war criminals face the full force of Yugoslav justice.<sup>80</sup>

On 23 May, Zivković launched yet another initiative aimed at embarrassing the British and the Americans into a faster and more rigorous implementation of the war crimes related provisions of the Long Armistice Terms. He proposed that

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<sup>78</sup>. FRUS, 1945, Vol. IV, pp. 1154, 1167 and 1172; FRUS, 1945, Vol. V, pp. 1229, 1233, 1266 and 1291-4; FRUS, 1946, Vol. II, p. 728; FRUS, 1946, Vol. VI., 869-70 and 887-88; FRUS, 1947, Vol. IV, 797-800; FRUS: 1947, Volume III, pp. 904-905; Rabel, op. cit., pp. 52-73; Rabel, R.G., 'Prologue to Containment the Truman Administration's response to the Trieste crisis of May 1945', *Diplomatic History*, no. 10, Spring 1986', pp. 141-160; Novak, B. C., *Trieste, 1945-54: The Ethnic, Political and Ideological Struggle*, Chicago, 1970, pp. 156-201; Harris, op. cit., pp. 332-43; Bohlen, op. cit., p. 253; Dinardo, R.S., 'Glimpse of an Old Order? Reconsidering the Trieste Crisis of 1945', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 21, 1997, pp. 365-382, passim; Lane, A.J., *Britain, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity, 1941-49*, Brighton, 1996, pp. 53-7.

<sup>79</sup>. FO 371/51023/U4229/29/73, 1-6-1945, doc. C 115, UNWCC minutes, 6-5-1945; FO 371/51023/U4210/29/73, 1-6-1945, secret, doc. C 110, UNWCC minutes, 14-5-1945.

<sup>80</sup>. Ibid.

Lord Finlay, the Chairman of the UNWCC, should request that an agency with advisory as well as executive powers be attached to the Allied Control Commission (ACC) in Italy to help the UNWCC carry out the provisions of Article 29, by tracing war criminals and thus, ensure that the SACMED replicated the actions of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) which had resulted in many alleged German war criminals being extradited to Yugoslavia for trial. These proposals were also embellished with accusations that the Allies were being tardy in apprehending Italian war criminals.<sup>81</sup>

The arrival of the Yugoslav proposals at the Foreign Office coincided with deliberations on how Theatre Commanders should proceed in order to apprehend war criminals on UNWCC lists in the areas of Italy under their authority. Britain had already pledged itself to the handing over to the requesting nation those war criminals whose names appeared on the UNWCC lists. Now, it tried to agree a policy of extraditions on demand with the Americans who had not given such a direct pledge. A common position was sought so that the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) could issue a directive.<sup>82</sup> Thus, Yugoslav claims that nothing was being done to punish Italian war criminals caused consternation and irritation to the British, especially as the Yugoslavs had been given permission to send missions to Italy but had not even bothered to acknowledge or act on this. The recently established and

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<sup>81</sup>. UNWCC, op. cit., pp. 350-1; FO 371/51024/U4463/29/73, 18-6-1945, record of discussion among Zivković, Lord Finlay and Stavropoulos, 23-5-1945; FO 371/51025/U4593/29/73, 13-6-1945, letter, Finlay to Dean, 6-6-1945; FO 371/51027/U4933/29/73, 23-6-1945, secret, M 64, UNWCC minutes, 64th meeting, 6-6-1945.

<sup>82</sup>. FO 371/51027/U4956/29/73, 25-6-1945, secret, telegram, DON 840, JSM to AMSSO, 21-6-1945; FO 371/51030/U5413/29/73, 13/7/45, top secret, telegram, FAN 591/FACS 259, CCS to Allied Commanders, 11-7-1945; top secret, telegram, NOD 978, Cabinet Office to JSM, 20-9-1945; FO 371/51021/U3821/29/73, 21-5-1945, secret, telegram, NAF 973, AFHQ to CCS, 16-5-1945; UNWCC, op. cit., pp. 31, 39 and 45.



hugely overstretched War Crimes Section (WCS) of the Foreign Office, normally sympathetic to Yugoslav claims against Italian war criminals, received the proposals with disbelief and deemed them to be beyond the UNWCC's mandate.<sup>83</sup> Patrick H. Dean of the WCS and R. A. Beaumont, one of the British delegates on the UNWCC and a Foreign Office official, delivered the knock-out blow to Zivković's proposals.<sup>84</sup> Zivković reacted by explicitly accusing the allies of procrastination. He continued venting his anger by stating that even though the Allies had been in control of Italy since 1943, they had as yet failed to apprehend any war criminals.<sup>85</sup>

The WCS continued with its efforts to speed up the issuing of the CCS directive. In July 1945, the Allies were able to issue a directive to the Theatre Commanders that authorised them to deliver immediately to the requesting nation any person wanted for trial for war crimes allegedly committed in the

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<sup>83</sup>. FO 371/51019/U3319/29/73, 1-5-1945, minutes by Dean, 27-4-1945, Ward, 28-4-1945; FO 371/51024/U4418/29/73, 7-6-1945, letter, FO to Rome, 7-6-1945. As more and more claims were being registered with the UNWCC, officials in the Reconstruction Department of the Foreign Office grew concerned that the ad hoc arrangements their department had set up to deal with the issue were in danger of collapsing due to the sheer number of allegations. In April 1945, Ward sensing impending chaos, advocated that a special section under a senior official within the Foreign Office should be created to coordinate policy on war crimes if a total breakdown was to be avoided. The Foreign Office heeded this warning: the War Crimes Section (WCS) was established to deal with war crimes committed by German, Italian and Japanese nationals against the nationals of other United Nations countries.

<sup>84</sup>. FO 371/51024/U4210/29/73, 1-6-1945, letter, Dean to Finlay, 2-6-1945; undated minute by Beaumont; telegram, no. 1895, FO to RESMED, 4-6-1945.

<sup>85</sup>. Ibid.; UNWCC, op. cit., pp. 351-2; FO 371/51026/U4729/29/73, 17-6-1945, telegram, no. 1174, RESMED to FO, undated; FO 371/51027/U4933/29/73, 23-6-1945, secret, M 64, UNWCC minutes, 64th meeting, 6-6-1945.

territory of that nation.<sup>86</sup> The directive was to be applicable to both German and Italian war criminals. Despite its all encompassing nature, the directive excluded from its mandate three major categories, namely, 'major war criminals' who were to be tried before international tribunals; alleged war criminals who were needed as witnesses at the international tribunals; finally, came those cases where a collaborator had been identified as an alleged war criminal. In these instances it was recommended that the Allied Commanders should seek the guidance of their political advisers before extradition could be decided.<sup>87</sup> The 12th July directive gave ample freedom of action to SACMED to embark, at last, on the apprehension of Italian war criminals.<sup>88</sup>

In August 1945, Britain embarked on its own important trial against an Italian who had committed crimes against British military personnel. General Bellomo was accused of killing British POWs. The case was surrounded by controversy, as it emerged that the depiction of Bellomo as a cowardly war

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<sup>86</sup>. WO 310/4, top secret, FAN 591/FACS 259, CCS to Alexander and Eisenhower, 11-7-1945; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.6, Box. 109, top secret, telegram, FAN 591/FACS 259, CCS to Alexander and Eisenhower, 11-7-1945; top secret, telegram, FAN 590/NAF 973, CCS to SACMED, 11-7-1945.

<sup>87</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/51019/U3450/29/73, 4-5-1945, most important, telegram, no. 293, FO to UK Delegation, San Francisco, 3-5-1945; FO 371/51019/U3392/29/73, 3-5-1945, top secret, telegram, no. 90066, WO to AFHQ, 30-4-1945; FO 371/51019/U3354/29/73, 2-5-1945, minute by Wardrop, 28-4-1945; FO 371/51022/U4025/29/73, 26-5-1945, Annex, FACS 217/FAN 551, 12-5-1945, APW minutes, APW(45)70, 25-5-1945; WO 310/4, 34A, FAN 591, CCS to Alexander, FACS 259, CCS to Eisenhower. By this stage it was clear that no Italian would be prosecuted as a major war criminal. Of the eight Fascists included in the War Cabinet list the whereabouts of only one, Graziani, was known, and it had been decided that he would be tried by the Italians.

<sup>88</sup>. FO 371/51027/U4956/29/73, 25-6-1945, secret, telegram, DON 840, JSM to AMSSO, 21-6-1945; FO 371/51020/U3821/29/73, 21-5-1945, secret, telegram, NAF 973, AFHQ to CCS, 16-5-1945; FO 371/51022/U4025/29/73, 26-5-1945, Annex, FACS 217/FAN 551, CCS to Allied Commanders, 12-5-1945; *ibid.*, U4098/29/73, 29-5-1945, secret, telegram, DON 785, JSM to Washington to AMSSO, 28-5-1945; WO 310/4, 34A, top secret, FAN 591/FACS 259, CCS to Alexander and Eisenhower, 11-7-1945; WO 310/179, top secret, telegram, FAN551/FACS 259, CCS to SACMED, 12-5-45.

criminal did not tally with his full war-time record.<sup>89</sup> The trial formed the cornerstone of the British prosecution for war crimes perpetrated by Italian officers against British citizens. It was typified by the single-minded determination of the British government to see Bellomo punished. There were reports in the British Press that the trial had been unfair and these claims centred around the inability and the unsuitability of the defence lawyer who, it was felt, was simply not up to his brief. Pleas for leniency and clemency poured in.<sup>90</sup> The outcome and the furore caused by the trial and the execution of Bellomo, however, increased the apprehension felt amongst the British for the war crimes issue and confirmed the prevalent feeling within the Foreign Office that the sooner the issue was dealt with the better.<sup>91</sup>

As the dust from the Bellomo case settled, the Yugoslavs again stepped up their campaign. In a highly publicised speech, Nedeljković, sought the trials of General Esposito, a regional military commander, General Eveli, the Inspector of Police in Trieste and Gaetano Colotti, a Police Commissioner, all three of whom he accused of being guilty of murder, imprisonment and terrorism in

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<sup>89</sup>. Many at the time, as well as recent researchers, have maintained that General Bellomo was a valiant man who fought fiercely against the Germans and the neo-fascists at the time of the armistice. Such cases are often surrounded by mythical assertions and counter-assertions and thus the reality is hard to pin down, especially after so many years.

<sup>90</sup>. The most prominent of these petitions came from Sir Noel Charles, Ferruccio Parri, the Italian Prime Minister, and Ivor Thomas, MP, the chairman of the Anglo-Italian Committee.

<sup>91</sup>. FO 371/51045/U6575/55/73, 31-8-1945, telegram, no. 2093, FO to Rome, 3-9-1945; *ibid.*, U6583/55/73, 1-1-1945, RESMED to FO, 30-8-1945; *ibid.*, U6636/55/73, 4-9-1945, telegram, no. 1644, Holy See to RESMED, 3-9-1945; *ibid.*, U6920/55/73, 12-9-1945, letter, Ivor Thomas, MP, chairman of 'Friends of Italy Committee', to Hector Mc Neil, Minister of State 3-9-1945; letter, McNeil, to Ivor Thomas, 8-9-1945; *ibid.*, U6960/55/73, 18-9-1945, Bovenschen to Sargent, 11-9-1945; FO 371/51046/U6973/55/73, 14-9-1945, telegram, no. 1415, Rome to FO, 12-9-1945; *ibid.*, U7034/55/73, 15-9-1945, telegram, no. 426, Rome to FO, 14-9-1945; *ibid.*, U7038/55/73, 16-9-1945, telegram, no. 1432, Rome to FO, 14-9-1945; *ibid.*, U8089/55/73, 13-9-1945, telegram, no. 458, FO to Rome, 17-10-1945; *The Times*, article, 30-7-1945;

Istria and Slovenia.<sup>92</sup> The Yugoslav Ambassador to the UK lost no time at all and wrote to Clement Attlee urging him to issue the Allied military authorities in Italy with instructions similar to those governing the hand-over of German war criminals.<sup>93</sup>

By autumn 1945, Britain found itself having to perform a balancing act between Yugoslavia and Italy. As yet, the Italian authorities had shown little haste in apprehending those war criminals requested by Yugoslavia. The first UNWCC list passed on to the Italians in the summer of 1945 had not produced a single response let alone the detection or apprehension of an alleged Italian war criminal.<sup>94</sup> From early on the Italian State had displayed a determined reticence over the issue. When in May 1944 the Council of Ministers under pressure from Tito, suggested that General Alessandro Pirzio Biroli, who had been a Commander in Albania and Yugoslavia, should be brought to face trial, Badoglio intervened vehemently and successfully to put an end to any such action.<sup>95</sup> Any hopes that the Italian position would soften proved in vain even after the May-June 1945 London conference of the UNWCC National Officers. This conference accepted Italy's status as a country which had been accused of having perpetrated war crimes, yet, at the same time, had been a victim of war crimes and that it constituted a special case. As such it should be allowed to prosecute neo-fascist Italian war criminals who had committed crimes

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<sup>92</sup>. WO 310/176, 16000/A3, secret, FX 72714, AFHQ to ALCOM, Rome, undated; *ibid.*, secret, telegram, no. 5307, Stone to AFHQ, 16-10-1945; confidential, letter, Shapcott to AFHQ, 6-9-1945; FO 371/51045/U5064/55/73, 28-6-1945, telegram, Sir R.S. Stevenson, British Ambassador to Yugoslavia, to FO, 18-6-1945.

<sup>93</sup>. FO 371/51046/U8375/55/73, 23-10-1945, Yugoslav Note, P. no. 3142, 19-10-1945.

<sup>94</sup>. WO 310/179, confidential, APO 394, 18A, War Criminals Listed with UNWCC: Handover- General Policy: Italians Listed as War Criminals, 2-9-45.

<sup>95</sup>. Domenico, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

against other Italians despite the fact that it was not a UNWCC member.<sup>96</sup> The government led by Parri was equally protective of Italian interests and resisted any intrusion into its affairs by Yugoslavia which it regarded as a predatory and hostile power. Italian misgivings of this kind signalled clearly to the British government that Italian co-operation was not going to be readily forthcoming. The fact, that these Italian reservations were received sympathetically at the Allied Commission and especially by Admiral Ellery Stone, the Allied Commissioner, also denoted that Italy would not be under any real pressure from the Allied Commission, the very body that was responsible for ensuring that Italy abided by the Armistice Terms fully.<sup>97</sup>

For its part, Britain tried to restore its credibility with Yugoslavia by showing that it was not involved in any conspiracy to shield Italian war criminals. Steps were taken to ensure that neutral countries, especially Switzerland, would not give asylum to alleged war criminals. In many instances the Foreign Office acted as Yugoslavia's intermediary in advocating the merits of the Yugoslav case

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<sup>96</sup>. UNWCC, op. cit., pp. 408-409; FO 371/51030/U5413/29/73, 13-7-45, minute by Ross 13-8-1945; secret, letter, Major Sprigg, WO to Beaumont; top secret, telegram, FAN 591/FACS 259, 11-7-1945; top secret, telegram, NOD 978, Cabinet Office to JSM, 20-9-1945; *ibid.*, U5439/29/73, 14-7-1945, telegram, no. 173, saving, Charles to FO, 4-7-1945; FO 371/51019/U3362/29/73, 2-5-1945, minutes by Ward, 5-5-1945, and Dean, 6-5-1945; FO 371/51028/U5073/29/73, 29-6-1945, letter, Dean to Norman, Cabinet Office, 5-7-1945; minute by Scott-Fox, WCS, 2-7-1945; FO 371/51029/U5324/29/73, 9-7-1945, secret, GEN 59/6, minutes of the Interdepartmental Committee on War Crimes meeting on 10-7-1945; FO 371/51020/U3538/29/73, 9-5-1945, secret, telegram, NOD 744, AMSSO to JSM, 9-5-1945; FO 371/51019/U3362/29/73, 2-5-1945, minutes by Ward, 5-5-1945, and Dean, 6-5-1945; FO 371/51037/U7427/29/73, 26-9-1945, secret, telegram, NOD 978, Cabinet Office to JSM, 21-9-1945; FO 371/51039/U8375/29/73, 23-10-1945, secret, telegram, DON 32, JSM to Cabinet Office, 15-10-1945; letter, Scott-Fox to Colonel Isham, WO, 3-11-1945; secret, telegram, NOD 67, JSM to Cabinet Office, 5-12-1945; secret, telegram, FAN 633, CCS to AFHQ, 8-12-1945; letter, FO to the Yugoslav Ambassador, London, 15-12-1945.

<sup>97</sup>. WO 204/2194, top secret, S-410, Stone to AFHQ, 9-1-1945; WO 310/179, confidential, APO 394, 18A, War Criminals Listed with UNWCC: Handover- General Policy: Italians Listed as War Criminals, 2-9-45.

against a particular war criminal and pressured the Swiss not to give sanctuary to such persons.<sup>98</sup> Two German war criminals who had been under British supervision, Generals Neidholdt and Rainer, were handed over to Yugoslavia.<sup>99</sup> The British government supported the Yugoslav proposal for a mission to be sent to Italy to investigate war crimes against Yugoslavs, despite

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<sup>98</sup>. FO 371/51045/U4231/55/73, 1-6-1945, telegram, no. 63, FO to Holy Sea, 21-6-1945; minute by Ross, 6-6-1945; *ibid.*, U4596/55/73, 13-6-1945, minute by Beaumont, 17-6-1945; *ibid.*, U5538/55/73, 19-7-1945, minutes by Harvey, 12-7-1945 and Scott-Fox, 12-7-1945; *ibid.*, U6528/55/73, 29-8-1945, minute by Scott-Fox, 16-8-1945; FO 371/51046/U7842/55/73, 28-9-1945, telegram, no. 458, Norton, Berne to FO, 28-9-1945; minutes Beaumont, 9-10-1945, Scott-Fox, 15-10-1945, and Dean, 17-10-1945. One of the most telling of these cases was that of G. Bastianini who had sought asylum in Switzerland after the collapse of the Salò Republic. Bastianini was a former Ambassador to London and from June 1942 to February 1943, he had been a former Governor of Dalmatia. The Yugoslavs accused him of being responsible for, amongst other things, murders, massacres, systematic terrorism and the killing of hostages. They presented enough evidence to enable the UNWCC to determine that there was a *prima facie* case against him and place him on their lists. Even though many in the FO felt that Bastianini had been accused of these crimes because of his position rather than his personal actions, it was decided to handle the case when the Yugoslavs asked Britain to mediate with the Swiss authorities. At stake here was the British policy of pressing neutral countries not to give asylum to war criminals and not just the credibility of Britain with Yugoslavia. The Bastianini case was viewed as one that could create a precedent. Oliver Harvey stressed that Britain 'should do nothing to encourage the Swiss to hold him [Bastianini] back or we shall weaken our whole policy'.

<sup>99</sup>. FO 371/51040/U9273/29/73, 24-11-45, letter, Scott-Fox to Isham, 11-12-1945; FO 371/51039/U8379/29/73, 23-10-1945, letter, Yugoslav Ambassador to FO, 23-10-1945.

the strong disagreement of the SACMED, the ACC and the Americans.<sup>100</sup> The Foreign Office, under Bevin, became even more involved in carrying out war crimes policy, especially since his aim was to improve Anglo-Yugoslav relations.<sup>101</sup> Thus, despite a border incident at Venezia Giulia,<sup>102</sup> Bevin instructed the WCS to impress again upon the War Office the need to arrest 'the persons listed by the UNWCC' and to hand them over to Yugoslavia.<sup>103</sup>

The British military in Italy, however, were not prepared to move without pointing out the obvious contradictions of acting on the current UNWCC lists. On the one hand, the British military was expected to apprehend senior officers of the Italian Army on UNWCC lists and on the other, it had to nurture a close relationship with the Italian Armed Forces and standardize them along British

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<sup>100</sup>. NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.6, Box: 109, confidential, memorandum, Stone to AFHQ, 28-8-1945; confidential, letter, no. 2208, Alexander Kirk, American Ambassador to Italy, to J. Grew, Acting Secretary of State, 4-9-1945; confidential, SACMED to CCS, 12-10-1945; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 800, Box: 118, confidential, telegram, MAT 962, re: TAM 718, SACMED to CCS, 10-12-1945; NARA RG 59, E381, Lot Files 54D328, Folder: War Criminals, Enclosure, telegram Barber to SACMED, 11-6-1945; FO 371/51045/U6815/55/73, 10-9-1945, telegram, no. 1644, Broad, to FO, 8-9-1945; *ibid.*, U4977/55/73, 26-6-1945, secret, telegram, MAT 739, Alexander to CCS, 6-6-1945; secret, telegram, TAM 625, CCS to AFHQ, 7-7-1945; *ibid.*, U6017/55/73, 6-8-1945, minute by Beaumont, 9-8-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2475, FO to AFHQ, 20-8-1945; *ibid.*, U6929/55/73, 12-9-1945, secret, telegram, no. 1670, RESMED to FO, 11-9-1945; FO 371/51046/U8204/55/73, 17-10-1945, letter, Dean to Bradshaw, 1-11-1945; WO 204/2191, *passim*; WO 204/2192, confidential, telegram, MAT 718, SACMED to CCS, 10-12-1945; WO 311/594, secret, telegram, NOD 939, WO to JSM, 14-8-1945.

<sup>101</sup>. FO 371/59400/R1288/58/92, 25-1-1946, letter, Sargent to D.C. Stapleton, Cabinet Offices, 29-1-1946; Lane, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-8.

<sup>102</sup>. NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.6, Box: 109, letter, 13 Corps to AFHQ, 13-10-1945. On 13 October, some Yugoslav troops crossed the Morgan line.

<sup>103</sup>. FO 371/57519/U2338/70/73, 28-2-1946, letter, Scott-Fox to Under Secretary of State, WO, 16-3-1946.

lines.<sup>104</sup> The problem was highlighted by the fact that the Yugoslav list contained the names of fifty Generals of whom thirteen were on the active list of the Italian Army.<sup>105</sup> General W.D. Morgan, the new SACMED who had been Alexander's Chief of Staff and who had been closely involved with British efforts to build a close relationship with the new Italian armed forces, cautioned that the arrest and extradition of 'superior officers' of the Italian Army would result in enormous political costs.<sup>106</sup> Their removal, he admonished, would not only have a disastrous effect on the re-organisation of the Italian Armed Forces but it would also affect 'the morale, efficiency and co-operation of the whole [Italian] Army'.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, the British element of Military Mission to the Italian Army (MMIA) was appalled at the prospect of its involvement in any investigations into the wartime conduct of the Italian Army, especially as it had close links with many of the officers on the UNWCC lists. It saw such involvement as a recipe for destroying its working relationship with the Italian Ministry of War and wasting the atmosphere of co-operation and trust it had built up with the leadership of the Italian Armed Forces. MMIA felt that its job was to look towards the future, re-organise the Italian Army and maintain a

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<sup>104</sup>. FO 371/51046/U9732/55/73, 7-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2701, FO to Rome, 17-12-1945; FO 371/57520/U6159/70/73, 1-7-1946, telegram, no. 521, Broad, to FO, 28-6-1946; FO 371/49954/ZM4139/2273/22, 1-8-1945, memorandum by Major General Browning, MMIA, undated; FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, memorandum by Ross 'Missions to the Italian Armed Forces and Police', 8-11-1946; FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, secret, letter, Brigadier C. S. Sudgen, WO to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2624/89/22 30-7-1946, secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Sudgen, 30-7-1946; FO 371/60622/ZM187/187/22, 12-1-1946, secret, letter, WO to FO, 20-8-1946.

<sup>105</sup>. FO 371/51046/U9723/55/73, 6-12-1945, WO memorandum, 'War Criminals', 22-11-1945.

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

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



good relationship with the Italian military establishment.<sup>108</sup> It resented what it perceived as the UNWCC and Judge Advocate General's (JAG) office encroaching into its area. It estimated that such intrusions would jeopardise its efforts 'by stirring up' matters that were in the past.<sup>109</sup> General Browning, the head of MMIA, pointed out that if Italian officers were to be arrested and handed over, a 'great blow would be dealt to the morale of the Italian Army'. On top of this, he warned, the Italian military would come to the conclusion that the British had let them down.<sup>110</sup> Consequently, MMIA announced that it would prefer not to get involved in war crimes work.<sup>111</sup> For its part, the Foreign Office rejected the suggestion that the alleged war criminals should not be handed over to Yugoslavia to face trial despite any political embarrassment that this would cause. The alternative was a further deterioration in Anglo-Yugoslav

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<sup>108</sup>. FO 371/49954/ZM4139/2273/22, 1-8-1945, minutes by Ross, 7-8-1945 and Hoyer-Millar, 8-8-1945; memorandum by Browning, undated; AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', memorandum by the Mediterranean Planning Staff, 15-12-1945

<sup>109</sup>. WO 310/4, secret, telegram, no. 234/5, Deputy Judge Advocate General's Office (DJAG) to GHQ. CMF, 30-12-1945; FO 371/51046/U9723/55/73, 6-12-1945 War Office memorandum, 'War Criminals', 22-11-1945; secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2701, FO to Rome, 17-12-1945; minutes by Beaumont, 7-12-1945 and 12-11-1945, Colville, 12-12-1945, and Dean, 13-12-1945; letter, SACMED to JAG, 27-11-1945.

<sup>110</sup>. FO 371/51046/U9723/55/73, 6-12-1945, WO memorandum, 'War Criminals', 22-11-1945.

<sup>111</sup>. Ibid., U9732/55/73, 7-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2701, FO to Rome, 17-12-1945; minutes by Beaumont, 7-12-1945 and 12-11-1945, Colville, 12-12-1945, and Dean, 13-12-1945; letter, SACMED to JAG, 27-11-1945; WO 310/4, secret, telegram, no. 234/5, DJAG to GHQ. CMF, 30-12-1945. The Judge Advocate's Office, sensitive to the concerns of MMIA, hastened to assure it that no action would be taken without consulting with HQ. The Judge Advocate General's, however, misinterpreted the MMIA's concerns as being based merely on procedural matters. Hence, he offered them the opportunity of being given powers to deal with the Italian Ministry of War directly in those cases where documentary evidence was needed from the records of these prominent officers. He had hoped that the MMIA could capitalize on its good relations with the Italian military and thus make any necessary investigations less embarrassing for the Italians.

relations, the exposure of Britain to charges of bad faith from that country and a possibly hostile action by Yugoslavia against Italy.<sup>112</sup>

The November elections in Yugoslavia had confirmed Tito's unshakable grasp over his country and highlighted once again the different tactics the British and the Americans had adopted towards Tito and which were eventually to affect war crimes policy implementation. Whereas, the Truman Administration had decided to mark its disapproval by putting distance between Washington and Belgrade, the Attlee government had decided that Yugoslavia was 'strategically too important' for Britain's position in the Mediterranean, Greece and Italy for it 'to adopt a policy of sulking' and that it had to do its best to maintain a relationship with Yugoslavia.<sup>113</sup> In keeping with the spirit of this policy, on 15 December, Attlee wrote to the Yugoslav Ambassador to inform him that the CCS had authorised SACMED to hand over alleged Italian war criminals to Allied Governments subject to conditions similar to those laid down for the handing over of German war criminals.<sup>114</sup> These new instructions to the Theatre Commanders were simply a reaffirmation of the previous general instructions regarding war criminals of July 1945.<sup>115</sup> All assessments, however, pointed to the fact that implementation of these orders could be carried out only by compelling Italy to hand over its war criminals to Yugoslavia.<sup>116</sup> The British felt that a unilateral implementation of such orders would make their position

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<sup>112</sup>. FO 371/57519/U2338/70/73, 28-2-1946, letter, Scott-Fox to Under Secretary of State, WO, 16-3-1946.

<sup>113</sup>. Lane, 'Coming to Terms with Tito', p. 17.

<sup>114</sup>. FO 371/51039/U8375/29/73, 23-10-1945, letter by Attlee to the Yugoslav Ambassador in London, 15-12-1945; *ibid.*, U8379/29/73, 23-10-1945, P. no. 3142, note by the Yugoslav Embassy, 19-10-1945.

<sup>115</sup>. WO 310/4, top secret, telegram, FAN 633, CCS to AFHQ, 8-12-1945.

<sup>116</sup>. FO 371/51046/U9732/55/73, secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945.

with Italy totally untenable and that in these circumstances it would better to act in close cooperation with the Americans. Once again however, American cooperation was unforthcoming.<sup>117</sup> Whilst British policy had been orientating itself towards the hand-over of UNWCC listed Italians, American policy had been indecisive. The issue of Italian war criminals was seen by the United States as an attempt by Yugoslavia to discredit Italy and the Allies and thereby further its own interests and those of the PCI. Furthermore, the State Department was determined not to allow America's influence in Italy to suffer, nor to be instrumental in destabilizing Italy should FAN 633 be implemented.<sup>118</sup> Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador to the United States, was informed that from the American point of view, the best action that the United States and Britain could adopt towards the issue of Italian war criminals was to 'stall' and not to implement any policy decision until the Italian Peace Treaty had been firmly concluded at which time Yugoslav claims could be dealt with directly by Italy and without any Allied entanglements.<sup>119</sup>

American attitudes towards the issue were not based on the merits of the Yugoslav case, but on their reading of Yugoslavia as a harbinger of Moscow's expansionist policy. A measure of America's attitude towards Yugoslavia was the fact that it had deliberately left the Belgrade Embassy without an

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<sup>117</sup>. FO 371/57519/U2652/70/73, 9-1-1946, minutes by Colville, 15-3-1946; Ross, 15-3-1946, Beaumont, 12-3-1946 and 18-3-1946 and Scott-Fox, 14-3-1946; secret, letter, GHQ.CMF, Lieutenant General, Commander in Chief to the Under Secretary of State, 26-2-1946; immediate, letter, Scott-Fox to Savill, WO, 18-3-1946; FO 371/51046/U9732/55/73, 7-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2701, FO to Rome, 17-12-1945.

<sup>118</sup>. NARA RG 59, Lot Files, 54D328, E381, Box: 4, top secret, telegram, letter by David McKey, *chargé d'affaires ad interim*, Rome, to the Secretary of State, 6-4-1946; confidential, telegram, no. 359, 8-6-1946.

<sup>119</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/57519/U4301/70/73, 22-4-1946, telegram, no. 2524, Earl of Halifax, the British Ambassador to US, to FO, 20-4-1946.



ambassador in residence.<sup>120</sup> American policy on the punishment of Italian war criminals was shaped to a large degree by the reports of the American Embassy in Rome and the dominant personality of Chief Commissioner Ellery Stone who was uncritically against surrendering any alleged Italian war criminals.<sup>121</sup> The unyielding attitude of the State Department towards this issue provoked criticism from the American *chargé d'affaires* in Belgrade, but the State Department did not waver.<sup>122</sup> The adoption of such an attitude by the US had severe implications for the implementation of 'hand-overs' and the Foreign Office identified American obstructionism as one of the major problems Britain faced in fulfilling its wartime pledge to bring Italian war criminals to justice.<sup>123</sup> The AFHQ was a combined and fully integrated organisation. This meant that British decisions could not be executed without the agreement of their American allies. It also meant that the line on extraditions that the SACMED had adopted against the Foreign Office could not be isolated and marginalised. The AFHQ kept procrastinating and creating additional delays which made the British government uncomfortable. The reason behind this inaction was that the US political adviser at the AFHQ had been briefed on the US policy of 'stalling' and consequently attempted to gain maximum delay before any action had to

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<sup>120</sup>. FRUS, 1947, IV, pp. 797-800.

<sup>121</sup>. WO 204/2194, top secret, S-410, Stone to AFHQ, 9-1-1945; Lane, *Britain, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity*, pp. 99-100; Bohlen, C., *Witness to History, 1929-69*, New York, 1969, p. 253; FRUS, 1945, Vol. V, pp. 1229, 1233, 1266 and 1291-4; FRUS, 1946, Vol. II, p. 728; FRUS, 1946, Vol. VI., 869-70 and 887-88.

<sup>122</sup>. FRUS, 1947, Vol. IV, 797-800.

<sup>123</sup>. FO 371/51019/U3354/29/73, 2-5-1945, minute by Dean, 30-4-1945.

be taken.<sup>124</sup>

As a result of the reluctance of the Italians to cooperate and the American policy of 'stalling' on war crimes issues the British government found itself in an acute dilemma. Beaumont stated it in the following stark terms, that 'justice requires the handing over of these people, .... expediency mitigates against it or at least against the handing over of some highly placed ones after such a long lapse of time'.<sup>125</sup> Although the WCS was not prepared to assess the degree of expediency itself and despite the fact that the Western Department maintained that according to the Armistice terms the responsibility of SACMED to expedite 'hand-overs' was unequivocal and clear, the Foreign Office began to rethink its policy.

### **III. War Crimes Punishment, Postwar Stability and the Emergence of the Cold War**

Britain now sought a policy that would ensure that promises given in the past could be kept, but would be flexible enough to accommodate many more factors and considerations. These included the state of Anglo-Italian relations; the need to thwart attempts by Moscow and the PCI to capitalize on the identification of prominent officers of the Italian military establishment as

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<sup>124</sup>. FO 371/57520/U5833/70/73, 4-6-1946, telegram, no. 461, Broad to FO, 3-3-1946; minute by Beaumont, 6-6-1946; letter, Sir Robert Craigie, the new chairman of the UNWCC, the retired pre-war Ambassador to Japan who replaced Finlay after the latter's death, 3-5-1945; minute by Scott-Fox, 18-5-1946; *ibid.*, U4353/70/73, 23-3-1946, telegram, no. 591, FO to Broad, 11-5-1946; letter, Bradshaw to Beaumont, 25-4-1946; top secret, important, telegram, no. 55502, WO to AFHQ, 19-4-1946; minutes, by Scott-Fox, 1-5-1946, 3-5-1946, 25-4-1945 and 10-5-1946, Newton, 2-5-1946, 6-5-1946 and 29-4-1946, Beckett, 29-4-1946, Colville, 30-4-1946, Sargent, 10-5-1946, Ross, 30-4-1946; telegram, no. 4048, FO to Washington, 1-5-1946.

<sup>125</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3031/70/73, 20-3-1946, minute by Beaumont, 21-3-1946; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.5-711.6, Box: 108, top secret, letter, WO to AFHQ, 19-4-1946; letter, Office of the British Political Advisor to DJAG, 15-5-1946.

common war criminals; the tangible deterioration in Anglo-Yugoslav relations; the urgency to speak in unison with America; and finally, genuine growing concern about fair trials. In view of this the Foreign Office sought the opinion of Sir Noel Charles, the British Ambassador to Italy, on the impact that the surrender of war criminals would have on Italian political stability in general and on Anglo-Italian relations in particular. Charles urged caution and stated that in his opinion Britain would be better off if the Italian government had the responsibility of settling the matter directly with Yugoslavia.<sup>126</sup> He advised also that in the event of extraditions, Britain should make sure that the process was seen as a joint Allied decision and not just a British one, so that any odium would be borne equally. He recommended that the CCS would have to implement such decisions and not the SACMED which was seen by the Italians as a British Command. The CCS was a joint Anglo-American institution and thus any resentment provoked by a CCS directive in Italy or Yugoslavia would be borne equally by the British and the US.<sup>127</sup>

The recommendations from Rome led the Foreign Office to the inescapable conclusion that any implementation of a hand-over policy would have to come from the CCS.<sup>128</sup> This did not mean that Britain was prepared to bury the issue

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<sup>126</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3483/70/73, 1-4-1946, telegram, no. 480, Charles to FO, 30-3-1946; important, letter, FO to Bradshaw, 11-4-1946.

<sup>127</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>128</sup>. FO 371/57519/U2652/70/73, 9-1-1946, minutes by Colville, 15-3-1946, Ross, 15-3-1946, 12-3-1946 and 18-3-1946, Scott-Fox, 14-3-1946; secret, letter, GHQ.CMF, Lieutenant General, Commander in Chief to the Under Secretary of State, 26-2-1946; immediate, letter, Scott-Fox to Savill, 18-3-1946; *ibid.*, U3483/70/73, 1-4-1946, telegram, no. 480, Charles to FO, 30-3-1946; minute by Beaumont, 2-4-1945; important, letter, FO to Bradshaw, 11-4-1946; FO 371/51046/U9732/55/73, 7-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 1934, FO to Belgrade, 17-12-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2701, FO to Rome, 17-12-1945.

as yet.<sup>129</sup> The WCS expressed the hope that the CCS would find a solution that did not depart from justice and that would not call into question the validity of the UNWCC lists.<sup>130</sup> Whilst the WCS was rethinking policy, Anglo-Yugoslav relations were deteriorating rapidly. The Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee (JIC) concluded that the Yugoslavs had embarked on a war of nerves and that their external policy was 'guided and encouraged' by the Soviet Union.<sup>131</sup> Although, Bevin and the higher echelons of the Foreign Office did not disagree with the assessment, they wanted to reverse this trend and they identified the issue of the hand over of war criminals and displaced persons as the main obstacles to accomplishing it.<sup>132</sup> In fact, Britain did not change its standing orders to the Theatre Commanders and Bevin, in a letter to the Undersecretary of the War Office on 16 March 1946 stated that in his opinion, when an Allied government's representative submitted a request to a British Commander for the surrender of a war criminal on a UNWCC list, then the 'war criminal' should be surrendered forthwith.<sup>133</sup>

Matters, however, were exacerbated by reports which highlighted the inhumane behaviour shown by the Yugoslavs, not only against Italian and

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<sup>129</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3031/70/73, 20-3-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 21-3-1946, Beckett, 22-3-1946, Ross, 25-3-1946; telegram, no. 273, Broad to FO, 19-3-1946; important, telegram, no. 454, FO to Rome, 28-3-1946; important, telegram, no. 494, FO to Belgrade, 28-3-1946; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.5-711.6, Box: 108, top secret, letter, WO to AFHQ, 19-4-1946; letter, Office of the British Political Advisor to DJAG, 15-5-1946.

<sup>130</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>131</sup>. NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 800, Box: 118, top secret, JIC, Revised Standing appreciation on Yugoslavia, 14-12-1945 and 15-2-1946.

<sup>132</sup>. FO 371/49499/R1288/58/92, letter, Sargent to Stapleton, 27-1-1946. On the displaced persons issue and its impact on Anglo-Yugoslav relations see Lane, A.J., 'Putting Britain Right with Tito: The Displaced Persons Question in Anglo-Yugoslav Relations, 1946-47', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 22, 1992.

<sup>133</sup>. FO 371/57519/U2338/70/73, 28-2-1946, letter, WCS to Under Secretary of State, WO, 16-3-1946.

German POWs, but also against their own dissidents and civilian population during the war. In this light the partisans, once viewed as valiant resistance fighters, came to be seen as brutal communists. This was a new understanding of what had occurred in the Balkan theatre of war and it made British judgements of the actions of some of the alleged war criminals less harsh. Even General Roatta's actions, looked at from this perspective, became comprehensible:

[From] the subsequent behaviour of the Yugoslavs one cannot, however, help feeling that General Roatta may have had good reason for a rather strict reign, if not harsh, application of the international laws of war particularly against armed civilians, snipers etc.<sup>134</sup>

There was also the issue of fair trials. The Foreign Office had always hoped to ensure that the extradited Italians would face a fair trial.<sup>135</sup> By this time, however, some of the excesses and arbitrariness of Yugoslav justice had become public and had shocked many in the Foreign Office, especially those at the Yugoslav desk of the Southern Department. The WCS tried to find a way of ensuring that persons arrested by the British military in Italy and handed over to Yugoslavia would get a fair trial. It asked the Yugoslav authorities to allow the British access to all interrogation reports and to allow the presence of an observer from the Mediterranean Command at the trials. A similar precedent had been created by the US in the case of the Czech war criminal, Franck. However, this raised the prospect of playing into Yugoslav and Russian hands by giving them the opportunity to present British efforts as

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<sup>134</sup>. FO 371/57520/U4331/70/73, 23-4-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-4-1946 and Scott-Fox, 26-4-1946; telegram, no. 337, Broad to FO, 20-4-1946; *ibid.*, U5666/70/73, 29-5-1946, minute by Margaret Carlyle, Foreign Office, Research Department, (FORD), 13-6-1946.

<sup>135</sup>. FO 371/51046/U10267/55/73, 22-12-1945, secret, telegram, no. 28, saving, FO to Belgrade, 8-2-1946; secret, telegram, no. 78, saving, FO to Rome, 8-2-1945; secret, telegram, no. 2375, Stevenson, Belgrade to FO, 19-12-1945.



being motivated by a desire to shield Italian war criminals, so the suggestion was dropped.<sup>136</sup>

Parliamentary pressure in the opening months of 1946 was less intense than it had been in 1945. This was partly because of the lack of sympathy for the Yugoslavs in general public opinion.<sup>137</sup> It was also due to the fact that the government had found the means of keeping embarrassing parliamentary questions at bay. MPs were either persuaded to withdraw their questions through informal means or, if they were insistent, were given details of British war crimes policy in private<sup>138</sup> thus, guaranteeing their silence.<sup>139</sup> The majority of Labour MPs, faced with the prospect of embarrassing their government by asking questions in favour of a country that was showing open hostility towards Britain, waived their questions. The MPs who continued asking awkward questions were those deemed to be recalcitrant troublemakers, confined to the backbenches. The Conservatives had not shown any lasting interest in the matter either. Thus, the government had a free hand on the issue and sought to find a way to 'shuffle out' of direct responsibility on extraditions and to regulate war crimes issues by including a war crimes clause in the Italian

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<sup>136</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>. Lane, *Britain, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity*, pp. 97-8.

<sup>138</sup>. FO 371/57555/U2568/126/73, 7-3-1946, secret, letter, Savill to Beaumont, 2-3-1946.

<sup>139</sup>. Ibid.; One such case was that of Captain Francis Noel Baker, MP for Brentford and Chiswick, who filed a question about the surrender of Generals Biroli and Ambrosio. His father, the Secretary of State for Air, Phillip Noel Baker was approached by the WCS to convince his son to withdraw the question. After pressure from his father he did so but he still insisted on knowing where the matter stood. The WO prepared a comprehensive account of all the policy decisions taken so far regarding the apprehension and surrender of Italian war criminals. It was candidly admitted that Biroli was employed at the Ministry of War, thus his case carried political considerations and that SACMED, for to this reason, had asked for further instructions. Otherwise, Noel Baker was assured, SACMED had been authorised to hand Italian war criminals over to Yugoslavia.

Peace Treaty. But, even this was not to be a straightforward endeavour.<sup>140</sup>

During this period, the postwar Italian state had begun showing signs of asserting its newly found but as yet fragile sovereignty and was in the process of trying to achieve international rehabilitation. The prospect of the extradition of some of its citizens to a neighbouring state which entertained territorial ambitions *vis-à-vis* Italy was not a welcome one. It was seen as an infringement of both Italian sovereignty and law. Rome decided to intervene in order to put a stop to all talk of extraditions and to convince Britain and America that a war crimes clause should not be included in the Italian Peace Treaty.<sup>141</sup> The De Gasperi government attempted to establish the principle that Italy could not be prosecuted for war crimes against peace. It based this claim on two facts. Firstly, Italy had not been mentioned in the Moscow Declaration and therefore the Declaration did not apply to Italian War Criminals but only to German ones.<sup>142</sup> Secondly, the fascist protagonists who had instigated the 1940 war had been dealt with already either by the partisans or, in the case of the surviving ones such as Graziani and Roatta, by the Italian Courts. As far as crimes against humanity were concerned, the Italian government maintained that Italy had not committed any. Accordingly, the only crimes the Italian government was prepared to concede that Italians had committed were war crimes connected with the violation of the rules and customs of war.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>. FO 371/57555/U2568/126/73, 7-3-1946, secret, letter, Savill to Beaumont, 2-3-1946.

<sup>141</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3691/70/73, 6-4-1946, telegram, no. 338, Broad to FO, 5-4-1946.

<sup>142</sup>. FO 371/57520/U4331/70/73, 23-4-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-4-1946 and Scott-Fox, 26-4-1946; telegram, no. 377, Broad to FO, 20-4-1946.

<sup>143</sup>. FO 371/57556/U5984/126/73, 19-6-1946, Italian note-verbale, presented by Count Roberti, the Minister at the Italian Embassy in London, 15-6-1946.

De Gasperi's argument was rather weak because the issue of Italian war criminality and the apprehension of Italian war criminals did not derive legitimacy from the Moscow Declaration, but from article 29 of the Armistice Agreement. Italy's claims that its nationals had not committed crimes against humanity did not cut much ice with the Foreign Office.<sup>144</sup> The War Crimes Section, the Western Department and W. E. Beckett, the Foreign Office's Legal Advisor all agreed that the Italian case, as had been put forward by De Gasperi and Count Roberti, the Minister at the Italian Embassy in London, would be unacceptable to all the Allies and that it ran counter to established practice.<sup>145</sup>

The De Gasperi government however had established a close rapport with both the American Embassy and the American military authorities in Italy who appeared to be very receptive to its line of argument.<sup>146</sup> De Gasperi put his case first to Admiral Ellery Stone whom he saw as the person most likely to champion his cause without wavering. He played up to American fears of the political repercussions that the extradition of Italian nationals to an 'enemy' state such as Yugoslavia would have on the internal situation in Italy. He also maintained that the Yugoslav judicial system could give 'no guarantee whatsoever of compliance with the most elementary principles of justice'.<sup>147</sup> The Italian government then attempted to establish the jurisdiction of Italian

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<sup>144</sup>. FO 371/57556/U5984/126/73, 19-6-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-6-1946, Beckett, 26-6-1946, Ross, 28-6-1946, F. F. Garner, WCS, 16-6-1946; letter, Scott-Fox to Hood, member of the UK 'peace-making' delegation in Paris, 1-7-1946; letter, Hood to Scott-Fox, 8-7-1946.

<sup>145</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>146</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3691/70/73, 6-4-1946, telegram, no. 338, Broad to FO, 5-4-1946; Miller, op. cit., p. 73; Ellwood, op. cit., 155-6.

<sup>147</sup>. FO 371/57520/U4331/70/73, 23-4-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-4-1946, and Scott-Fox, 26-4-1946; telegram, no. 377, Broad to FO, 20-4-1946.

courts to try Italian war criminals. To make its case stronger the Italian government announced in May 1946 that the Italian Ministry of War had commenced its own investigations into the activities of the Italian Army in occupied territories, in order to punish those who were proven to be guilty of war crimes.<sup>148</sup> Courts would be set up to try these war criminals.<sup>149</sup> De Gasperi also promised Ellery Stone and Philip Broad, the British Political Advisor at the AFHQ, that the results of these investigations would be communicated to the Allied Commission as soon as they had been completed.<sup>150</sup> The only point the Italians were prepared to concede voluntarily was that other states trying Italian war criminals should be limited to those cases where the accused men were already in the hands of the requesting state concerned.<sup>151</sup> Italy, once again had made it abundantly clear that it would not collaborate willingly with any attempts to extradite its citizens to face trial in Yugoslavia or any other country for that matter.<sup>152</sup>

Thus it was, that one of the thorniest and most complex matters in the issue of implementing war crimes punishment - that of undertaking successful prosecutions and extraditions of war criminals who were nationals residing in

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<sup>148</sup>. FO 371/57556/U5984/126/73, 19-6-1946, Italian note-verbale, presented by Count Roberti, 15-6-1946; minutes by Beaumont, 24-6-1946, Beckett, 26-6-1946, Ross, 28-6-1946, and Garner, 16-6-1946; letter, Scott-Fox to Hood, Paris, 1-7-1946; letter, Hood to Scott-Fox, 8-7-1946.

<sup>149</sup>. FO 371/57556/U5984/126/73, 19-6-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-6-1946, Beckett, 26-6-1946, Ross, 28-6-1946, Garner, 16-6-1946, letter, Scott-Fox to Hood, Paris, 1-7-1946, letter, Hood to Scott-Fox, 8-7-1946.

<sup>150</sup>. FO 371/57520/U4331/70/73, 23-4-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-4-1946 and Scott-Fox, 26-4-1946; telegram, no. 377, Broad to FO, 20-4-1946.

<sup>151</sup>. FO 371/57556/U5984/126/73, 19-6-1946, Italian note-verbale, 15-6-1946.

<sup>152</sup>. FO 371/57556/U5984/126/73, 19-6-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-6-1946, Beckett, 26-6-1946, Ross, 28-6-1946, and Garner, 16-6-1946; letter, Scott-Fox to Hood Paris, 1-7-1946; letter, Hood to Scott-Fox, 8-7-1946.

a sovereign state - came to the fore.<sup>153</sup> It was apparent that such people could only be extradited by coercing an unwilling Italian government. SACMED warned, however, that the use of coercion on the Italian government to extradite officers of the Italian Army, some of who had rendered 'valuable service' to the Allies in the war against Germany and who were working very closely with the Allies on re-organising the new Italian Army, would harm the relations of Britain and the United States with the Italian government and that it would provoke such hostility in Italian public opinion that it would impede the stabilisation of the country.<sup>154</sup> To give extra weight to his argument, he listed the names and rank of the most controversial cases. General Berardi, the Chief of Staff of the Italian Army until the capture of Rome, the Commander-in Chief of Sicily and now the Chairman of the Army re-organisation committee; General Pelligra, the Quartermaster General of the Italian Army since 1943 and General Orlando, the Commander of the Carabinieri Corps in Rome. He continued with Generals Cerutti, Rittan and Zatti who all held appointments at the three headquarters of the Italian Army Commands.<sup>155</sup> Broad, also expressed his doubts about the advisability of forcing the Italian government to arrest and extradite Generals

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<sup>153</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3691/70/73, 6-4-1946, Broad to FO, 5-4-1946.

<sup>154</sup>. FO 371/57520/U6159/70/73, 1-7-1946, telegram, no. 521, Broad, to FO, 28-6-1946; FO 371/57523/U7877/70/73, 29-10-1946, letter, McNeil, Minister of State, FO to Captain J.W. Snow, House of Commons, 30-10-1946; draft minute to the Minister of State, 13-10-1946. In his eagerness to convince the CCS that these people should not be touched, Morgan, sent a letter to the State Department in which he claimed that some of these people were under consideration to receive military decorations from the British Government for their war-time services. SACMED's emotive pleas were received with disbelief and anger at the Foreign Office. The idea that any of these Generals would be considered for decoration was openly laughed at. The War Crimes Section and other departments which were involved felt that SACMED's arguments were not convincing nor adequate to justify a refusal of the Yugoslav request. There was also concern that the argument of not extraditing war criminals because they had co-operated and were still working together with the Allies was bound to create bitterness and hostility in Yugoslavia and was unlikely to gain the respect of Italians.

<sup>155</sup>. Ibid.

on the Italian Army's active list.<sup>156</sup>

Such factors, combined with the need to preserve Britain's traditional interests in the area, led British statesmen to rethink their policy of hand-overs and to fall in with American line of postponing Allied responsibility for the apprehension of Italian war criminals to some future date after the signing of the Italian Peace Treaty.<sup>157</sup> The new situation and its impact on war crimes policy was to become apparent during the Paris meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in spring and summer 1946 at which discussions took place on the contents of the war crimes clause in the Italian Peace Treaty.

At these meetings of the CFM, East-West relations had become more obviously strained. The marked deterioration in any desire for co-operation was all too apparent. The adoption of the policy of containment by the United States had instilled a high degree of rigidity and intransigence in its behaviour towards the Soviet Union and although the Americans had not as yet given up on cooperation, they were determined not to make any substantial concessions

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<sup>156</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3691/70/73, 6-4-1946, Broad to FO, 5-4-1946.

<sup>157</sup>. FO 371/57519/U3031/70/73, 20-3-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 1-3-1946, Beckett, 22-3-1946, Ross, 25-3-1946; telegram, no. 273, Broad to FO, 19-3-1946; important, telegram, no. 454, FO to Rome, 28-3-1946; important, telegram, no. 494, FO to Belgrade, 28-3-1946; *ibid.*, U2652/70/73, 9-1-1946, minutes by Colville, 15-3-1946, Ross, 15-3-1946, 12-3-1946 and 18-3-1946, Scott-Fox, 14-3-1946; secret, letter, GHQ.CMF, Lieutenant General, Commander in Chief to the Under Secretary of State, 26-2-1946; immediate, letter, Scott-Fox to Savill, 18-3-1946.

to the Soviets.<sup>158</sup> The drafting of a war crimes clause for the Italian Peace Treaty led to recriminations and discord. When the Council of Foreign Ministers met on 2 May 1946, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, Soviet Foreign Commissar, was at his most scathing, Bevin at his most ill-tempered, and James F. Byrnes, the American Secretary of State, offered solutions that failed to please anyone.<sup>159</sup> Both East and West proclaimed that they were in agreement, at least in principle, that Italy should co-operate with the UN in the apprehension, surrender and punishment of war criminals. However, there were profound differences on the wording of such a clause and these mirrored the different priorities and policy aims of each of the Powers vis-a-vis Italy. The Soviets, who were the champions of the Yugoslav cause in this instance and who were not hindered by considerations of the fate of high-ranking Italian officers, proposed a blunt and straightforward draft clause which imposed on Italy the obligation to surrender all alleged war criminals requested by an Allied or Associated power.<sup>160</sup> The American, British and French proposals, in contrast, were more subtle and provided for the creation of an international screening

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<sup>158</sup>. For the tense atmosphere at the 1946 CFM meetings see Gaddis, J.L., *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-47*, New York, 1972, pp. 304-15 and 323-5; Kolko, J. and G., *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-54*, New York, 1972, pp. 45-50; Feis, H., *From Trust to Terror: The Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950*, London, 1970, pp. 121-135; Yergin, D., *Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State*, Boston 1978, pp. 221-3; Loth, W., *The Division of the World, 1945-1955*, London 1988, pp. 113-5; Poggiolini, I., 'Some Reflections on Postwar II Peace Practices, 1945-47', in Varsori, A., and Hill, D.M., *Europe, 1945-1990: The End of an Era?*, London, 1995, pp. 18-21; Byrnes, J.F., *Speaking Frankly*, New York, 1947, pp. 138-155; Gladwyn, Lord, *The Memoirs of Lord Gladwyn*, London, 1972, p.193.

<sup>159</sup>. FO 371/57659/U4784/4473/73, 3-5-1946, secret, CFM. (46) 7th meeting, 2-5-1946.

<sup>160</sup>. FO 371/57659/U5781/4473/73, 31-5-1946, Part III: draft Soviet proposal for a war crimes clause to be inserted in the Italian Peace Treaty, undated.

body to assess the individual merits of Yugoslav requests.<sup>161</sup> These proposals were intended to maintain stability in Italy and to protect it from the most extravagant Yugoslav claims. The Americans, in fact, were not entirely convinced that the inclusion of a war crimes in the Italian Peace Treaty was either necessary or desirable at all and that perhaps a protocol rather than a clause should be drawn up to include provisions for war criminals and thereby for the issue to be settled independently of the Peace Treaty. Both Byrnes and his deputy James C. Dunn, maintained that the Peace Treaty was intended to regulate the future relations between Italy and the Allies and not to dwell on the past, thus it should contain only permanent provisions not temporary ones such as the punishment of war criminals.<sup>162</sup>

Byrnes' proposals were met with open hostility by the Soviets and with private disquiet by the British and the French. Molotov characterised Byrnes' proposals as being 'undesirable' and asserted that the omission of any provisions dealing with the apprehension of war criminals from the Italian Peace Treaty would create the impression that the Allied Powers 'were granting amnesty to Italian war criminals still at large in Italy'.<sup>163</sup> The atmosphere in the CFM became so antagonistic that it was decided to defer

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<sup>161</sup>. Ibid., U6060/4473/73, 25-7-1946, Part III: UK, US and French draft proposal for a war crimes clause to be inserted in the Italian Peace Treaty, undated.

<sup>162</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/57659/U5686/4473/73, 29-5-1946, secret, CFM meeting, 1-5-1946; ibid., U5780/4473/73, 31-5-1946, immediate, telegram, 276, A. Duff Cooper, British Ambassador to France, to FO, 31-5-1946, 30-5-1946; FO 60703/ZM1435/1286/22, 1-5-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 46th meeting, item 3: War Criminals, US delegation proposal, CFM(D)(46)65, 1-5-1946; FRUS, 1946, Vol. II, pp. 209-14.

<sup>163</sup>. FO 371/57659/U5686/4473/73, 29-5-1946, secret, CFM meeting, 28-5-1946; ibid., U4784/4473/73, 3-5-1946, secret, British record of CFM (46) 7th meeting item 2, Italian Peace Treaty: War Criminals, 2-5-1946.



the matter to a later date.<sup>164</sup> The late May meeting appeared to be drawing towards another inconclusive end and one which could have been potentially harmful for East -West relations, when Byrnes put some fresh proposals on the table.<sup>165</sup> He went on to recommend that the screening machinery should have a fixed lifespan of twelve months during which period demands could be presented to the Italian Government for the extradition of war criminals. Such an arrangement, Byrnes, suggested, would in no way constitute an infringement of Italian sovereignty.<sup>166</sup>

The Soviets objected at once to the suggestion that such a screening body should be created at all. They maintained that their own proposals would deal adequately with the issue. To the disbelief of everyone present, they put themselves forward as the champions of Italian sovereignty by claiming that such a body would be inconsistent with the sovereignty of the Italian state. It was apparent that the Soviets, whilst pushing for Yugoslavia's interests, were at the same time trying not to appear anti-Italian and thereby turning Italian public opinion against the PCI.<sup>167</sup> After all, June 1946 was to be a critical time in Italy as elections for the Constituent Assembly and a referendum to decide the 'institutional question' were scheduled for 2 June. The adoption of this stance by the Soviets pushed the West into a defensive posture.<sup>168</sup> Bevin's deputy on the CFM, Gladwyn Jebb, appeared willing to accept the American

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<sup>164</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/60705/Z1855/1286/22, 1-6-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 55th meeting, item 4, War Criminals, 28-5-1946.

<sup>165</sup>. Ibid.; FRUS, 1946, Vol. II, pp. 209-14.

<sup>166</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/57659/U5686/4473/73, 29-5-1946, secret, CFM meeting, 28-5-1946.

<sup>167</sup>. FO 371/57659/U4612/4473/73, 30-4-46, secret, CFM(D)(46)63, minute by Beaumont, 24-4-1946.

<sup>168</sup>. FO 371/60705/Z1855/1286/22, 1-6-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 55th meeting, item 4, War Criminals, 28-5-1946; FO 371/57659/U5686/4473/73, 29-5-1946, secret, CFM meeting, 28-5-1946.

proposal so long as it contained strong enforcement provisions.<sup>169</sup>

The deputies' meeting in Paris was inconclusive on the issue. Discord and non-cooperation were the order of the day. Nevertheless, what was significant as far as the West was concerned was that the Russians had succeeded in emerging as the champions of Italian sovereignty, whilst the West, which had set out to protect Italy, had succeeded only 'in scoring an own goal'.<sup>170</sup> Attempts were made to rectify this situation and Gladwyn Jebb and Dunn were entrusted with the task of countering the claims advanced by Molotov's deputy Andrei Vyshinski. The two maintained that, in view of Italy's complex situation, Bymes' proposals for the establishment of a screening body was a strong and convincing one and that it did not constitute an infringement of Italian sovereignty.<sup>171</sup>

Vyshinski held his ground stubbornly. He embarked on a pro-Italian tirade,

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<sup>169</sup>. FO 60703/ZM1435/1286/22, 1-5-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 46th meeting, item 3: War Criminals, US delegation proposal, CFM(D)(46)65, 1-5-1946.

<sup>170</sup>. FO 371/60706/Z1855/1286/22, 1-6-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 55th meeting, item 4, War Criminals, 28-5-1946; FO 371/57659/U5686/4473/73, 29-5-1946, secret, CFM meeting, 28-5-1946. Jebb and Dunn produced lengthy and intricate explanations to underpin the creation of the screening authority. They claimed that it would deal with requests made from several governments for the same war criminal, it would consider whether the requests were genuine and it would monitor cases to ensure that criminals were brought to justice in the proper manner. In addition to these functions, the body could be used as a means to apply pressure on the Italian Government to ensure its co-operation in obtaining the custody of certain war criminals.

<sup>171</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/57659/U5767/4473/73, 31-5-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 46th meeting, 1-5-1946. Jebb also replied to Soviet accusations by pointing out that their relative ease in dealing with war crimes in the Balkans and Eastern Europe lay in the fact that their position was substantially different to that of Italy which had been an Axis Power. This made Italy distinctly different from the ex-enemies countries. The ex-enemies had been involved in war with but one or two countries and this made the situation infinitely less complicated than that of Italy which had been involved in war with all the UN powers.

claiming that after the signature of the Peace Treaty, the paramount authority in Italy ought to be the Italian government which being a democratic government could be trusted to deal faithfully with the problem. To put a committee over it would be 'unfair' he concluded. In this atmosphere of recrimination, counter-recrimination and shifting arguments, Dunn and Jebb refused to compromise on the issue of a screening body even after Vyshinski declared that the first paragraph of the United States' proposal was acceptable to him but that he still objected to the screening body. Thus, another impasse had been reached.<sup>172</sup>

Despite the public solidarity they maintained with the United States, London and Paris voiced their private doubts about the Byrnes proposals. France, in addition, was unhappy with the idea of dropping the issue of the punishment of war criminals from the Peace Treaty altogether and it was unwilling to see Italy free from the obligation of apprehending and surrendering war criminals after the signing of the Peace Treaty.<sup>173</sup> The British also regarded Byrnes' proposals as being unviable. Their main concern was that the proposals would create much bitterness in Yugoslavia and would give Belgrade the means to block the signing of the Treaty indefinitely. At this stage, Britain determined that it should not be drawn into the role of a referee in any disputes that could arise from Yugoslav requests and it was, moreover, concerned to extricate itself from having to enforce any of the provisions unilaterally. The War Crimes Section maintained that after the signing of the Peace Treaty, Britain's priority

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<sup>172</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>173</sup>. FO 371/57659/U5780/4473/73, 31-5-1946, immediate, secret, telegram, no. 276, Cooper to FO, 31-5-1946, 30-5-1946; FO 371/57521/U7950/70/73, 1-11-1946, minutes of ACI's 58th meeting, item: War Criminals, 25-10-1946.

should be 'to drop out of the picture as regards to the Yugoslav claims'.<sup>174</sup>

There ensued a flurry of activity in the Foreign Office to draft a new proposal that would ensure that a war crimes clause was incorporated in the Italian Peace Treaty but, at the same time, one that did not contain stronger terms than those included in the Armistice and one that did not entail any enforcement provisions that could draw Britain into the position of playing the adjudicator. The WCS drafted its own proposal which was rather innocuous and read:

on the request of any United Nations Government, the Italian Government will apprehend and surrender for trial or make available as witness, Italian subjects or nationals of states at war with the United Nations designated by the UNWCC or by the International Military Tribunal established by an agreement signed at London in London on 8 August 1945.<sup>175</sup>

At the 3 June meeting of the CFM, the United States accepted the long-held British position that the Peace Treaty should contain a war crimes clause and that applications for surrender should be made within 90 days through the UNWCC. The Soviets were still not ready to agree. The sticking point, now, was the reference to the UNWCC whose authority the Soviet Union did not recognise.<sup>176</sup> This meant that the CFM failed to reach any consensus on the

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<sup>174</sup>. FO 371/57659/U5686/4473/73, 29-5-1946, minutes by Scott-Fox, 25-5-1946 and Newton, 27-5-1946; letter, Scott-Fox to Bradshaw, 29-5-1946; *ibid.*, U7090/4473/73, 11-9-1946, minutes by Scott-Fox, 29-8-1946 and Cope, 30-8-1946.

<sup>175</sup>. FO 371/57659/U5781/4473/73, 31-5-1946, immediate, letter, Beaumont to Hood, 14-6-1946; minutes by Beaumont, 31-5-1946 and Beckett, 4-6-1946; FO 371/60607/ZM1908/1286/22, 5-6-1946, secret, UK proposal, CFM(D)(46)108, 1-6-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2264/1286/22, 27-6-1946, secret, Soviet proposal, for article 38, CFM(D)(46)145, 25-6-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2265/1286/22, 27-6-1946, secret, US proposal, CFM(D)(46)153, 26-6-1946.

<sup>176</sup>. FO 371/60607/ZM1950/1286/22, 11-6-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 61st meeting, 3-6-1946; FO 371/60606/ZM1855/1286/22, 11-6-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 55th, meeting, item 4, 28-5-1948.

matter.<sup>177</sup> The issue was finally settled at the 26 June meeting where the text of the war crimes clause to be inserted in the main body of the text of the Draft Treaty with Italy was agreed.<sup>178</sup> The Paris Peace Conference upheld the decision and article 45 of the Peace Treaty with Italy obliged Italy to take all necessary steps to ensure the apprehension and surrender for trial of alleged Italian war criminals.<sup>179</sup>

Any lingering concerns the British had about any Yugoslav reaction paled into insignificance when it became apparent that the terms of the Peace Treaty had come as a shock to the Italians who had hoped that co-belligerency would bring them redemption.<sup>180</sup> Misgivings were articulated in Italy on the direction of the country's foreign policy and comments were made that perhaps Italy should have 'played up to the Soviets more'. Riots and violence against allied troops occurred amid wild talk that Italy would refuse to sign the Peace Treaty.<sup>181</sup> Noel Charles believed that if, at this juncture, the decision was taken to hand over Italian nationals to Yugoslavia, then it would only be to the

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<sup>177</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/57569/U5939/4473/73, 14-6-1946, CFM(46)(D) 6th meeting, British record, item 1, Italian Peace Treaty: War Criminals, 3-6-1946; FO 371/60708/ZM2084/1286/22, 18-6-1946, secret, Draft Peace Treaty with Italy: article 38, CFM(D)(46)177, 13-6-1946; FO 371/60710/ZM2201/1286/22, 25-6-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 79th meeting, 22-6-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2254/1286/22, 27-6-1946, secret, item 8, article 38, CFM(D)(46) 81st meeting, 25-6-1946.

<sup>178</sup>. FO 57659/U6170/4473/73, letter Cope, UK delegation, Paris, to Scott-Fox, 1-7-1946.

<sup>179</sup>. FO 371/60710/ZM2276/1286/22, 1-7-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 83rd meeting, 26-6-1946; for the text of article 45 see Wheeler-Bennett, Sir J., and Nicholls, A., *The Semblance of Peace: The Political Settlement after the Second World War*, London, 1972, p. 671.

<sup>180</sup>. FO 371/57521/U6241/70/73, 8-7-1946, secret, telegram, no. 1044, Charles to FO, 6-7-1946; FO 371/60711/ZM2641/1286/22, 1-8-1946, telegram, no. 243, Charles to FO, 1-8-1946.

<sup>181</sup>. FO 371/60711/ZM2574/1286/22, 25-7-1946, restricted, telegram, no. FX69302, AFHQ to COS, 17-7-1946.

detriment of Anglo-Italian relations and that only the PCI and the USSR would benefit.<sup>182</sup> He also reported that most Italian dissatisfaction with the Peace Treaty focused on Britain and that its popularity in Italy 'had hit a record low' because Britain had proved to be 'too cool and impartial for this most feminine people'.<sup>183</sup> Charles' intervention focused minds in the Foreign Office and helped them to the conclusion, once again, that Italian political stability and the state of Anglo-Italian relations took precedence over any other consideration.<sup>184</sup>

On 8 July 1946, SACMED was informed by the War Office that the United States and the British governments had agreed that the question of the apprehension and surrender of Italian War Criminals should be referred back to the CCS for further scrutiny. This was despite the fact that Britain was convinced that most of the Italian claims and assumptions lay in the grey area of legality.<sup>185</sup> At the same time it was intimated that policy was becoming orientated towards letting the matter be settled by direct negotiations between the Italian and Yugoslav governments.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup>. FO 371/60710/ZM2276/1286/22, 1-7-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 83rd meeting, 26-6-1946.

<sup>183</sup>. FO 371/60711/ZM2371/1286/22, 8-7-1946, telegram, no. 1051, Charles to FO, 6-7-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2514/1286/22, 18-7-1946, confidential, despatch, no. 369, Charles to Bevin, 18-7-1946; minutes by Ross, 19-7-1946 and 24-7-1946 and Hoyer-Millar, 19-7-1946.

<sup>184</sup>. *Ibid.*, ZM2692/1286/22, 7-8-1946, minute by Ross, 24-7-1946.

<sup>185</sup>. FO 371/57556/U5984/126/73, 19-6-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 24-6-1946, Beckett, 26-6-1946, Ross, 28-6-1946, Garner, 16-6-1946; letter, Scott-Fox to Viscount Hood, 1-7-1946; letter, Hood to Scott-Fox, 8-7-1946. Beckett pointed out that the Armistice provisions which provided for the hand-over of Italian War Criminals took precedence over the general principles of international law and that Italy would have to abide by the Armistice terms *ex hypothesi*.

<sup>186</sup>. FO 371/57520/U6159/70/73, 1-7-1946, telegram, no. 6786, FO to Washington, 10-7-1946; FO 371/57523/U7877/71/73, 29-10-1946, letter, McNeil to J.W. Snow, MP, 30-10-1946; FO 371/57520/U6159/70/73, 1-7-1946, top secret, telegram, NAF 1165, Morgan to CCS, 26-6-1946.

In September 1946, the Italians finally announced that their own Commission of Inquiry had considered carefully the personnel records of Italian Army Officers who had served in occupied Europe and had decided to prosecute those who had 'infringed the principles of the international laws of war and the dictates of humane feeling and in particular the principles of the inviolability of hostages and of the limitation of the right of reprisal'.<sup>187</sup> The names of forty military officers and high-ranking fascist civilians on war crimes charges were duly identified by the Commission which asked the Italian Ministry of War to submit the facts surrounding the crimes of these people to the Italian judiciary.<sup>188</sup> It was an attempt by the Italian government to gain the initiative on the issue, to silence communist jibes that it was not doing enough in this field and above all, to protect Italian sovereignty by resisting the extradition and trial of its nationals in courts outside its jurisdiction.<sup>189</sup>

The chances for such a scheme working were not good. The Italian state's own programme of prosecutions against fascists had stalled at the end of 1945 with the issuing of the Togliatti Amnesty Decree. The Italian government was trying to lay to rest the ghosts of the past and not to continue with trials that gave free propaganda to the PCI and which could undermine the process of national

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<sup>187</sup>. FO 371/57566/U7192/126/73, 17-9-1946, letter, Rome to WCS, 10-9-1946; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.5-711.6, Box: 108, restricted, airgram, A-1005, Key to the Secretary of State, 25-10-1946.

<sup>188</sup>. FO 371/57566/U7437/126/73, 7-10-1946, letter, British Embassy, Rome to WCS, 27-9-1946; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.5-711.6, Box: 108, letter, Key to Secretary of State, 25-9-1946.

<sup>189</sup>. FO 371/57556/U7437/126/73, 7-10-1946, letter, Rome to WCS, 27-9-1946.

reconciliation.<sup>190</sup> Even if the State had been willing to proceed with such a programme, Italian judges, the least purged Italian institution because of the myth of the neutrality of public administration, had not indicated any proclivity for the matter.<sup>191</sup> Italian prisons were already overcrowded and there was a reluctance to convict yet more people.<sup>192</sup>

A settlement which would allow Italy to deal directly with Yugoslavian requests was not without its practical complications. Yugoslavia was not properly equipped to deal directly with Italy because it had no formal representation in Rome.<sup>193</sup> Britain was worried that the Yugoslavs and Italians would try to exploit this absence of direct contact and drag the British authorities into acting as their channel of communication. The British government was determined not to be placed in this position.<sup>194</sup> The Americans, too, were concerned that both

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<sup>190</sup> Ferraresi, F., *Threats to Democracy: The Radical Right in Italy after the War*, Princeton, 1996, p. 20; Domenico, op. cit., pp. 207-8; Gambino, op. cit., pp. 253-6; Battaglia, A., *Dieci anni dopo: Saggi sulla vita democratica italiana*, Rome 1955, pp. 347-8; Algardi, Z., *Processi ai fascisti: Anfuso, Caruso, Graziani e Borghese di fronte alla giustizia*, Firenze, 1958, pp. 18-9; Mercuri, L., *L'epurazione in Italia, 1943-1948*, Cuneo, 1988, p. 185; Mercuri, L., 'Il primo governo De Gasperi e il problema dell'epurazione', pp. 129-44; Bocca, G., *Palmiro Togliatti*, Bari, 1977, pp. 458-59.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., pp. 210-212; Ferraresi, op. cit., pp. 18-19; Battaglia, A., *I Giudici e la politica*, Bari, 1962, pp. 90-4; Canosa, R., and Federico, P., *La magistratura in Italia dal 1945 a oggi*, Bologna, 1974, pp. 130-1; Pavone, C., *La continuità dello Stato: Istituzioni e uomini*, Torino, 1974, pp. 252.

<sup>192</sup> FO 371/57566/U7363, 1-10-46, minute by Ross, 1-10-1946; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.5-711.6, Box: 108, secret, CHQ.CMF to AFHQ, 25-10-1946.

<sup>193</sup> FO 371/57521/U7911/70/73, 31-10-1946, minute by Garner, 31-10-1946.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., letter, Ward, Rome to Dr. S.J. Smodlaka, Yugoslav Delegation to Allied Control Council, 23-10-1946; *ibid.*, U7678/70/73, 18-10-1946, minutes by Garner, (undated) and Ross, 25-10-1946; letter, Bevin to the Yugoslav *chargé d'affaires*, 31-10-1946; letter, the British Embassy, Rome to WCS, 23-10-1945; secret, telegram, no. 269, P.W.S.Y. Scarlett, British Political Advisor, AFHQ to Rome, 16-10-1946; *ibid.*, U7950/70/73, 1-11-1946, minute by Garner, 6-11-1946; telegram, no. 312, Ward, Rome to FO, 28-10-1946.



countries would try to drag in the Armistice Powers, but they could see no other option than to inform Yugoslavia that it should take up the issue of extraditions directly with the Italians.<sup>195</sup> The only way forward was to establish Yugoslavian relations with Italy.<sup>196</sup> The Foreign Office was also concerned over the possibility that Yugoslavia might have solid grounds to reject the legality of any of these schemes. The fact was that the Revised Armistice Terms were still operational and would continue to be so until the Peace Treaty was formally ratified by the Italian government.<sup>197</sup> The Americans, however, did not seem bothered by this. For them, the provisions of the 1943 Armistice had been superseded by events. This was so partly, because they had come to the conclusion that the legal status of Italy had changed *de facto* from the moment the AMG, regime had been abolished, and also because from the moment Yugoslav fighters had shot down two American C-47 transport planes in August they had begun treating Yugoslavia as a pariah state.<sup>198</sup>

A perceptible hardening of the British position also became abundantly clear in early August 1946 when Zivković launched his final assault at the UNWCC.

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<sup>195</sup>. Ibid., U6459/70/73, 26-7-1946, minutes, by Garner, Ross and Scott-Fox, 26-7-1946; telegram, no. 4758, Lord Inverchapel, British Ambassador to the United States to FO, 25-7-1946; telegram, no. 7538, FO to Washington, 1-8-1946; telegram, no. 4903, Inverchapel to FO; NARA RG 59, E. 381, Lot Files, 54D238, Folder: War Criminals, confidential, memorandum, October 1946.

<sup>196</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>197</sup>. FO/371/57520/U5409/70/73, immediate, letter, WCS to British Embassy, Washington, 28-6-1946; NARA RG 59, Lot Files, 54D328, E381, Box: 4, passim; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.5-711.6, Box: 108, letter, British Political Advisor's Office to Morgan, 15-5-1946.

<sup>198</sup>. FO 371/57521/U6459/70/73, 26-7-1946, minutes, by Garner, Ross and Scott-Fox, 26-7-1946; telegram, no. 4758, Inverchapel to FO, 25-7-1946; telegram, no. 7538, FO to Washington, 1-8-1946; telegram, no. 4903, Lord Inverchapel to FO; ibid., U6989/70/73, 3-9-1946, minute by Garner, 3-9-1946; letter, Washington to WCS, 28-8-1946; NARA RG 59, E. 381, Lot Files, 54D238, Folder: War Criminals, confidential, memorandum, October 1946; FRUS, 1946, Vol. VI, pp. 867-978, passim.

His aim was to put pressure on Britain and simultaneously to publicise Yugoslavia's powerlessness in laying its hands on any of the listed Italians. Zivković outlined Yugoslav complaints to Sir Robert Craigie, the chairman of the UNWCC but eagerly accepted Craigie's offer of a list of the names of the 'worst' war criminals and whose cases did not imply any political considerations.<sup>199</sup> The result was a new list of twenty-two alleged Italian war criminals whom the Yugoslav Government was extremely anxious to 'bring to book'.<sup>200</sup>

This list was further reduced by Colonel H. H. Wade, the UNWCC Research Officer, to seven cases. The seven had been selected by Colonel Wade because specific charges had been brought against them which included brutality and a deliberate liquidation of civilian populations. Among the worst cases featured the names of General Pirzio Tucci the GOC of the notorious 'Messina' Division, General Roatta, General Orlando, the GOC of the 'Sardegna' Division, and Generals Macario and Berardi who were currently actually in command of troops.<sup>201</sup> When Craigie presented his report to the War Crimes Section, he stated clearly that there was no justification for protecting these seven 'irrespective of what sort of trial they were likely to get' and any fate Yugoslav justice had in store for them.<sup>202</sup> The UNWCC also went on to declare that a refusal to surrender these seven Generals, in view of the serious nature of the charges against them, would expose the whole mechanism for

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<sup>199</sup>. FO 371/57522/U6561/71/73, 6-8-46, letter, Zivković to Craigie, 23-7-1946.

<sup>200</sup>. Ibid., letter, Craigie to Zivković, 31-7-1946

<sup>201</sup>. FO 371/57523/U7435/71/73, 7-10- 1946, top secret, CCS 705/19, Appendix "B", Enclosure "B", 20-9-1946.

<sup>202</sup>. Ibid., memorandum drafted by Colonel Wade, Research Officer, UNWCC, 6-8-46.

punishing war criminals to serious criticism and even condemnation.<sup>203</sup>

By contrast, the WCS, did not focus on the charges against the seven, but on the fact that they had occupied and were still occupying high ranking positions in the Italian military hierarchy.<sup>204</sup> The Foreign Office accepted that the seven Generals fell into the categories of persons who would normally be handed over to Allied nations but decided that to apprehend and surrender such people would cause severe embarrassment to the Allied Authorities and give rise to

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<sup>203</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/57523/U7435/71/73, 7 October 1946, Enclosure "C": Discussion, 20-9-1946. The UNWCC had stressed that they were meticulous in their listings and had gone on to explain their procedures. All cases were submitted to Committee I for examination. If the Committee was not totally satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to justify a prosecution or that the evidence constituted a *prima facie* case, the case was rejected or it was adjourned until such evidence was submitted. To strengthen their argument the UNWCC revealed that so far they had rejected in whole or in part, 77 cases submitted by Yugoslavia and that they had adjourned 29 cases.

<sup>204</sup>. Ibid., minute by Garner, 10-8-1946 and Colville, 12-8-1946. General Orlando's case raised, understandably, the most important objections. Garner explained that it would be 'quite impracticable' for the British government to force the Italian Government to extradite a man of Orlando's seniority, 'who had been appointed as a Minister of War by the Armistice Powers in 1943 and who currently commanded a Carabinieri Corps in Rome'. He was also quick to point out that similar considerations applied to the other names contained on Wade's list. Colville, similarly, advised that it would be 'politically most inexpedient' to try to make the Italians hand over men such as Orlando.

resentment by the Italians.<sup>205</sup> The answer, again, was to impress on the Italians the necessity to get on with it, take the initiative themselves and 'steal the Yugoslav thunder'.<sup>206</sup>

This approach did not meet with the approval of the UNWCC which was clearly appalled at the prospect of seeing these most guilty of men evade justice. However, the uppermost concern for the British government now was to wash its hands of the matter of the punishment of alleged Italian war criminals and thus, it was not prepared to be swayed.<sup>207</sup> It knew that the pleas of the UNWCC would fall on deaf ears, since the Americans would not support extraditions and that the Italians would not co-operate.<sup>208</sup> The Allied authorities in Italy were instructed by the CCS not to handle any of the Yugoslav requests. They were to inform the Yugoslavs that they should take up the matter directly with the Italian government and that they would have to put their requests for surrender to a panel made up of prominent Italians. Where disagreements arose or if the panel raised objections to the surrender of a person, the Yugoslavs could

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<sup>205</sup>. FO 371/57523/U7435/71/73, 7-10-1946, Appendix "B", 20-9-1946; United Nations War Crimes Commission, *Law Reports of Trials of War Criminals*, Vol. 4, London, 1948, pp. 1-95, passim. The possibility that these men were listed as war criminals because of their position as commanding officers of troops who had committed war crimes and not because of any personal responsibility, was not deemed to be irregular or unprecedented. In fact, the Yamashita and Hamma cases that the United States tried in the Far East, had created the precedent that 'a General who failed to control troops under his command may be charged as a war criminal because of that failure'. In the case of the Yugoslav Government, some of the claims against offences of this type had been corroborated in reports by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). The case of General Orlando did not fall into this category. He had been charged, not because he had failed to control his troops, but because he had ordered his troops to kill immediately, on the spot, all hostages with the exception of the wounded, women and men under 18 years who should be handed over to prescribed tribunals

<sup>206</sup>. Ibid., minutes by Garner, 13-8-1946 and Colville, 12-8-1946.

<sup>207</sup>. Ibid., letter, Craigie to FO, 31-7-1946.

<sup>208</sup>. NARA RG 59, Lot Files, 54D328, E381, Box: 4, top secret, report by the Combined Civil Affairs Committee, CCAC 213, Enclosures "A", "B" and "C", August 1946.

appeal to the 'Four Ambassadors' in Rome, namely the American, Soviet, British and French.<sup>209</sup> If any one of the Ambassadors opposed the application 'a deadlock would ensue and the matter would most probably die a natural death'.<sup>210</sup> These instructions meant essentially, the annulment of the provisions of July 1945 CCS directive.<sup>211</sup> It also meant that the terms of the Italian Peace Treaty came to be applied even prior to its signing. The clear implication was that Yugoslavia would not be able to lay its hands on any of the war criminals and as a result, many an alleged war criminal escaped justice.<sup>212</sup> The British government in the meantime hoped to avoid any Yugoslav opprobrium in the future because of the involvement of the Soviet Ambassador in the process.<sup>213</sup>

The change of British policy on 'hand-overs' nevertheless left a bitter taste in the mouth of most Foreign Office officials. There was little disagreement that as things stood this was the best policy for Britain to follow to extricate itself from the matter. Nevertheless, the general feeling, as summarized in a minute by Sir J. R. Colville, of the Southern Department, was that,

we have put ourselves in the wrong by not exerting pressure on the Italians in accordance with our obligations under the Armistice Terms to surrender at least some of the unquestioningly guilty men.<sup>214</sup>

Inevitably, the gloomy conclusion was drawn that British efforts to apprehend

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<sup>209</sup>. FO 371/57521/U7678/70/73, 18-10-1946, telegram, no. 268, Scarlett to FO, re: FAN 696, 16-10-1946.

<sup>210</sup>. FO 371/57659/U7187/4473/73, 16-9-1946, confidential, letter, WCS to Scarlett, 26-9-1946.

<sup>211</sup>. Ibid., minutes by Garner, 21-10-1946 and Ross, 25-10-1946; FO 371/57521/U6989/70/73, 3-9-46, letter, British Embassy, Washington to WCS, 28-8-1946; letter, Garner to Stapleton, 6-9-1946.

<sup>212</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>213</sup>. FO 371/57521/U8105/70/73, 29-11-46, minutes by Garner, 3-12-1946 and Ross, 4-12-1946; ibid., U8137/70/73, 5-12-46, minute by Garner, 9-12-1946; letter, Ward to Attlee, 18-11-1946.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., minute by Colville, 26-2-1947.

Italian War Criminals had been 'scarcely adequate'.<sup>215</sup> F. F. Garner, the head of the WCS, advised that the least Britain could do at this late stage, was to persuade the Italians themselves to take some action in 'the most flagrant cases'.<sup>216</sup> The Foreign Office, having failed to stick to policies that would ensure the prosecution of these alleged criminals and having suffered a bout of bad conscience, was becoming angry with what it regarded as Italian slackness in dealing with the issue. The De Gasperi government's failure to act with the speed it had promised at the announcement of the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry into the deeds of the Italian Armed Forces in occupied Europe further exacerbated the Foreign Office's irritation. There was also concern that Italian delay would offer ammunition to those who were accusing the Italian government of condoning the crimes of its fascist predecessors.<sup>217</sup> In fact, it was not until November that the Italians informed the Rome Embassy that they were about to charge 40 Italians as war criminals. These included Bastianini and Generals Roatta, Robotti, Magdali, all of whom were people that had been listed as war criminals by the UNWCC at Yugoslavia's request.<sup>218</sup>

This pressure on Italy to act, however, brought about a further deterioration in Anglo-Italian relations. To compound the problem, the British shied away from assuring the Italians that so long as a war criminal was tried in an Italian court, he would not be liable for surrender to Yugoslavia. It was considered that such

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<sup>215</sup>. FO 371/57557/U8026/126/73, 20-11-1946, minute by Garner, 21-11-1946.

<sup>216</sup>. FO 371/57521/U8105/70/73, 29-11-46, minutes by Garner, 3-12-1946 and Ross, 4-12-1946; *ibid.*, U8137/70/73, 5-12-46, minute by Garner, 9-12-1946; letter, Ward to Attlee, 18-11-1946.

<sup>217</sup>. FO 371/66566/U93/24/73, 17-1-1947, minutes by Garner, 18-1-1947 and 28-3-1947, Ross, 18-1-1947 and Beckett, 23-1-1947.

<sup>218</sup>. FO 371/57557/U8026/126/73, 20/11/46, Rome to WCS (copy of Nenni's letter to Stone, 23-10-1946), 14-11-1946.

an assurance would be contrary to the provisions of the treaty and would, moreover, be superfluous as the Four Ambassadors could justifiably refuse such requests if the person had already been punished by his own country's courts.<sup>219</sup> The net result of these British actions was that the Italians felt that they were being 'picked on'. This significantly curtailed Britain's ability to exert pressure on Italy to hand over at least a couple of 'clear cases'.<sup>220</sup> The idea of bringing the issue up at the Italian Foreign Minister's forthcoming visit to London was floated, but this came to nothing. Such a step was deemed as desirable because it would help to minimise the controversy this issue had inevitably caused.<sup>221</sup> First, the visit was postponed and then, after De Gasperi returned from Washington, in January 1947 and decided to resign in order to engineer a crisis that would lead to the eventual exclusion of the PCI and the PSI from future governments, he replaced Pietro Nenni with Count Carlo Sforza. As a result, Nenni's visit never took place. By the time Sforza visited London in autumn, worries about the Italian General elections of April 1948 had overtaken every other concern.

With the decision that hand-overs were no longer a matter of Allied responsibility and that such issues would have to be settled directly between Yugoslavia and Italy, in October 1946, the Yugoslav government despatched

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<sup>219</sup>. FO 371/66567/U715/24/73, 9-6-1947, minutes by Garner, 11-6-1947 and 23-6-1947, and F.D. W. Brown, Italian Section of the Western Department of the FO, 12-6-1947; confidential, letter, WCS to Rome, 1-7-1947; *ibid.*, U786/24/73, 28-7-1947, confidential, letter, Washington to WCS, 23-7-1947.

<sup>220</sup>. FO 371/66565/U21/21/73, 6-1-1947, minutes by Garner, 10-1-1947; FO 371/66566/U164/24/73, 23-1-1947, Yugoslav note, 15-1-1947. One of the 'clear cases' considered was that of Pirzio-Biroli, the ex-military Governor of Montenegro whose name appeared in all Yugoslav demands and UNWCC lists.

<sup>221</sup>. *Ibid.*; FO 371/57522/U6561/71/73, 6-8-1946, letter, Garner to the British Embassy, Rome, 27/8/1946; FO 371/66565/U21/21/73, 6-1-1947, minutes by Garner, 10-1-1947 and 15-1-1947, and Beckett, 8-1-1947; *ibid.*, U21/21/73, 6-1-1947, letter, British Embassy, Rome, to WCS, 28-12-1946.

a note to the Foreign Office in which it proclaimed that its worst fears, that 'an unjustified and incomprehensible discrimination between German and Italian war criminals' would occur, had finally been realised.<sup>222</sup> A reminder was included of the fact that, despite the assurances that they had received from the British government, of the seven hundred and seventy six (776) UNWCC listed Italian war criminals, not one had been extradited. The note concluded with a plea to the British government to reconsider its policy and honour its previous pledges.<sup>223</sup> The Foreign Office reacted to the note with relief as it was perceived to be 'mild' and interpreted it as a sign of Yugoslav weariness with the issue. The British were not disposed to change their policies now but the Western Department and the WCS continued to advise that the best way forward was to urge the Yugoslavs to take the matter up directly with Italy and at the same time Britain attempted to convince the Americans to exert pressure on the Italians to surrender some of the 'worst offenders' and to pursue a more energetic course in dealing with, at least, some of their own war criminals.<sup>224</sup> For the USA, the cultivation of Italy was the main aim.<sup>225</sup> In view of the

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<sup>222</sup> FO 371/57521/U8105/70/73, 29-11-46, Yugoslav note, no. P 1677, 27-11-1946; *ibid.*, U7678/70/73, 18-10-1946, Yugoslav note, 31-10-1946; FO 371/57521/U8137/70/73, 5-12-1946, Ward to Clement Attlee, 18-11-1946; *ibid.*, U7950/70/73, 5-11-46, telegram, no. 312, Rome to FO, 28-10-1946; *ibid.*, U7962/70/73, 7-11-46, top secret, telegram, NAF 1230, SACMED to CCS, 2-11-1946; NARA RG 59, Lot Files, 54D328, E381, Box 4, top secret, telegram, FAN 696 re.: NAF 1165, CCS to SACMED, 9-10-1946; top secret, telegram, NAF 1230 re.: 696, AFHQ to CCS, 2-11-1946; NARA RG 84, Decimal Files, 711.5-711.6, Box: 108, top secret, telegram, no. 5263, ALCOM to AFHQ, 22-10-1946; SACMED to AFHQ, top secret, telegram, F 72819, 22-10-1946.

<sup>223</sup> FO 371/57521/U8105/70/73, 29-11-46, Yugoslav note, no. P 1677, 27-11-1946; *ibid.*, U7678/70/73, 18-10-1946, Yugoslav note, 31-10-1946.

<sup>224</sup> FO 371/66566/U69/24/73, 11-1-1947, minutes by Hoyer-Millar, 16-1-1947, P.H. Gore-Booth, Peace-Making Department, 20-1-1947, Beckett, 21-1-1947; memorandum entitled: Italian War Criminals wanted by Yugoslavia, drafted by Garner, 15-1-1947; Yugoslav note, no. P19, 8-1-1947; confidential, telegram, no. 919, FO to Washington, 30-1-1947; confidential, telegram, no. 920, FO to Washington, 30-1-1947.

<sup>225</sup> NARA RG 59, Lot Files, 54D328, E381, Box: 4, top secret, report, CCAC 231, Enclosure "A": Recommendations, Enclosure "C": Discussion, August 1946.



American reluctance to exert any pressure on Italy, Britain concluded that there was no point in further undermining its relationship with that country. Yugoslav efforts to secure the extradition of the 'worst offenders' therefore came to nothing.<sup>226</sup> The British dilemma of keeping both the Italians and the Yugoslavs satisfied had been resolved.<sup>227</sup>

Yugoslavia made a last ditch attempt to register its displeasure and embarrass the West for failing to bring any of the alleged Italian war criminals on the UNWCC lists before its courts. The Yugoslav Ambassador in London despatched further direct and acerbic notes to the Foreign Office on 8 and 15 January 1947.<sup>228</sup> Apart from the ritual protests against Britain's failure to extradite not even one Italian War Criminal to Yugoslavia, he went on to voice explicit accusations that Britain had adopted, along with the Americans, a policy of 'non-extradition'.<sup>229</sup> Yugoslavia thus accused Britain and America of a direct breach of their international obligations. Yugoslavia's wrath had been further inflamed by what it perceived as the rehabilitation of fascist leaders in Italy. The Yugoslav government was enraged by the fact that persons it had

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<sup>226</sup>. FO 371/66566/U429/24/73, 17-2-1947, minute by Garner, 19-2-1947; NARA RG 59, Lot Files, 54D328, E. 381, Box: 1, top secret, memorandum, subject: 'Tarchiani's visit and revision of Italian Peace Treaty, 4-5-1947' drafted by W. Dowling, Director of European Affairs, to G. Marshall, Secretary of State, 6-5-1947.

<sup>227</sup>. FO 371/66567/U715/24/73, 9-6-1947, minutes by Brown, 11-12-1947 and 12-6-1947, Garner, 11-6-1947; memorandum, record of a meeting between Garner and Count Roberti, 6-6-1947; confidential, letter, WCS to the British Embassy, Rome, 1-7-1947; FO 371/66566/U492/24/73, 17-2-1947, minutes by Garner, 19-2 and 3-3-1947, Beckett, 20-2-1947, Colville, 26-2 and 3-3-1947, Brown, 28-2 and 4-3-1947, C.F.A. Warner, Superintending Under-Secretary of the Information Department of the FO, 18-3-1947; confidential, telegram, no. 1044, Washington to FO, 17-2-1947; confidential, telegram, no. 1673, 20-2-1947.

<sup>228</sup>. FO 371/66566/U69/24/73, 11-1-1947, P. No. 19, Yugoslav note, 8-1-1947.

<sup>229</sup>. Ibid.

listed as war criminals and whose extradition it had repeatedly demanded, were allowed to roam free in Italy and even allowed to publish books which extolled their war records and the achievements of the Italian Army.<sup>230</sup> This was interpreted as another attempt to bury the past.

Embarrassing Parliamentary questions on the British government's policy towards the prosecution of Italian war criminals had been contained so far by appealing to the questioners' better judgement, as well as by pressuring them to withdraw. However, not every Member of Parliament was prepared to be 'gagged'. At a time when the government had hoped that this issue had gone away, E. A. Bramall, MP for Bexley, raised the issue of the extradition of Pirzio-Biroli in the House of Commons.<sup>231</sup> E. A. J. Davies, MP for Enfield, was asked by the Foreign Office to approach Bramall to convince him to withdraw his question. In private, Bramall expressed his anger at this approach by becoming abusive towards the Foreign Office and the military. In public, he simply refused to withdraw. His question was dealt with by a dismissive Hector McNeil, who replied, unhelpfully, that information included in UNWCC lists was not made public and that Biroli was in Rome.<sup>232</sup>

For the remainder of 1947, the issue surfaced occasionally in the form of acerbic Yugoslav notes and despite empty Yugoslav threats to take the matter to the Security Council of the United Nations<sup>233</sup> its significance subsided as

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<sup>230</sup>. Graziani, R., *Ho difeso la patria*, Roma, 1948; Roatta, M., *Otto milioni di baionette*, Milan 1946.

<sup>231</sup>. FO 371/66567/U551/24/73, 27-3-1947, minutes by Garner, 19-3-1947 and 20-3-1947, Warner, 21-3-1947; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 1946-47, Fifth Series, Vol. 435, Col. 830-1, London, 1947, parliamentary question, Bramall, MP, 24-3-1947.

<sup>232</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>233</sup>. FO 371/66566/U69/24/73, 11-1-1947, P. No. 19, Yugoslav note, 8-1-1947.

Anglo-Yugoslav relations improved for a while with the signing of the Bled agreement in September 1947.<sup>234</sup> By the end of 1947 and as the April 1948 general election in Italy approached, the concern to secure the electoral victory of the Christian Democrats eclipsed all other considerations and prompted Britain to drop all of its remaining war crimes claims against Italy.<sup>235</sup> After the Stalin/Tito split in the summer of 1948 and the improvement of Yugoslavia's relations with the West, the Yugoslav Government did not bring the matter up again. It died a quiet death. The issue remained buried until the late 1980s when journalists discovered the UNWCC archive.<sup>236</sup>

### Conclusion

The honouring of the war time pledge which Britain had undertaken as an Armistice power and as a founding member of the UNWCC to ensure the surrender of alleged Italian war criminals to Yugoslavia became one of the most delicate and embarrassing aspects of British policy towards Italy. The issue was never intended to dominate British policy towards Italy and it was not one that the British regarded as being central to Anglo-Italian relations. Nevertheless, Britain's desire to uphold its commitments succeeded in straining critically the relations between the two countries at a time when both strove to build a new relationship. Early policy decisions and their implementation were complicated initially by the exigencies of war and later by the unwillingness of the post-war Italian state to compromise its newly found

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<sup>234</sup>. For the Bled agreement see Lane, *Britain, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>235</sup>. FO 371/73180/Z2464/317/22, 22-3-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 304, H. Ashley-Clarke, the Minister at the British Embassy in Paris to FO, 22-3-1948; FO 371/73181/Z2755/317/22, 1-4-1948, telegram, no. 360, Harvey to Bevin, 1-4-1948; confidential, telegram, no. 1078, Bevin to Harvey, 10-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z4113/317/22, 17-5-1948, letter, French Embassy in London to FO, 14-5-1948; *ibid.*, Z3535/317/22, 27-4-1948, letter, Mallet to Sforza, 16-4-1948.

<sup>236</sup>. Palumbo, M. 'Genocidio all' Italiana', *Epoca*, 17-1-1988.

sovereignty by handing over its citizens to face trial in a former enemy state.

In view of the circumstances prevalent in the international scene and in Italy, Britain had little scope for pursuing its policy towards hand-overs more vigorously than it did, short of enforcing its decisions unilaterally. Such action however carried with it the unwelcome prospect of probably precipitating the untimely collapse of the De Gasperi government.<sup>237</sup> As a result, when tensions increased between East and West, the protection of the anti-Communist order in Italy and the neutralization of the PCI became paramount. These two aims were fundamental and they affected every aspect of British policy towards Italy and not least its war crimes policy.

Eventually, British attempts to achieve the surrender of alleged Italian war criminals were curtailed by the emergence of the Cold war and by Yugoslavia's strong identification with Stalin.<sup>238</sup> Consequently, the responsibility for war crimes punishment was passed on to the Italian government and the British dropped out from the scene. This signified Britain's abdication of its position on extraditions but it did not mean that the British government was willing to see these alleged war criminals go unpunished, nor that it conspired to shield them. The Foreign Office continued to put pressure on Italy to try some of its 'worst' war criminals and such action contributed greatly to jeopardizing Anglo-Italian relations and undermining British influence in Italy. The Italians felt that they were being treated harshly and unsympathetically by Britain and that British

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<sup>237</sup>. FO 371/73180/Z1836/317/22, 28-2-1948, minute by Brown, 28-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z1625/317/22, 12-2-1948, letter, Rome to War Crimes Section, 25-2-1948.

<sup>238</sup>. FO 371/57519/U2652/70/73, 8-3-1946, minutes by Beaumont, 12-3-1946 and 18-3-1945, Scott-Fox, 14-3-1946, Ross, 15-3-1946, Colville, 15-3-1946.

actions fell short of the unequivocally supportive stance of America.<sup>239</sup>

The war crimes issue showed how difficult it was for Britain, despite its good intentions, to implement a policy when it was an issue of allied rather than unilateral responsibility, especially when the allies were at loggerheads with each other on how best to proceed. After all, action against Italian war criminals was not undertaken as a punitive exercise against postwar Italy but in the interests of justice and with the intention of rehabilitating Italy in the international scene. From the moment the issue began threatening the fragile new-order in that country, a compromise had to be reached that the Italian State would feel comfortable with and that would not put into question its newly found sovereignty. This was essential if Italy was to be successful in its herculean task of containing indigenous communism and maintaining its pro-Western orientation.

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<sup>239</sup>. FO 371/57521/U7678/70/73, 18-10-1946, telegram, no. 268, Scarlett to FO, re: FAN 696, 16-10-1946; *ibid.*, 57521/U8105/70/73, 29-11-46, minutes by Garner, 3-12-1946 and Ross, 4-12-1946; *ibid.*, U8137/70/73, 5-12-46, minute by Garner, 9-12-1946; letter, Ward to Attlee, 18-11-1946; FO 371/66566/U429/24/73, 17-2-1947, minutes by Garner, 19-2-1947 and 3-3-1947, Beckett, 20-2-1947, Colville, 26-2 and 3-3-1947, Brown, 28-2 and 4-3-1947, C.F.A. Warner, Superintending Under-Secretary of the Information Department of the FO, 18-3-1947; confidential, telegram, no. 1044, Washington to FO, 17-2-1947; confidential, telegram, no. 1673, 20-2-1947; NARA RG 59, Lot Files, 54D328, E. 381, Box: 1, top secret, memorandum, subject: 'Tarchiani's visit and revision of Italian Peace Treaty, 4-5-1947' drafted by W. Dowling, Director of European Affairs, to G. Marshall, Secretary of State, 6-5-1947; FO 371/66567/U715/24/73, 9-6-1947, minutes by Brown, 11-12-1947 and 12-6-1947, Garner, 11-6-1947; memorandum, record of a meeting between Garner and Count Roberti, 6-6-1947; confidential, letter, WCS to the British Embassy, Rome, 1-7-1947.

## Chapter Two

### Britain and the Reconstruction of the Post-Fascist Italian Armed Forces

For the British government, an active involvement in the reorganization of the Italian armed forces and the cultivation of close ties with the Italian military were important components of its foreign policy towards Italy in the immediate postwar period. British reconstruction plans for the Italian Army had several goals. These were, to build an armed force that would be properly equipped and adequately trained to preserve law and order in Italy and to defend its frontiers from a Yugoslav attack once Allied forces were withdrawn after the signing of the Italian Peace Treaty. At the same time, a fine balance had to be struck between Italy's legitimate defence needs and the necessity to curb any menace it could pose to its neighbours.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these obvious aspirations there were others. The British saw an involvement in Italian military and police matters and the fostering of close links with these circles as a means for preserving influence in post-treaty Italian affairs. This would bolster Britain's position *vis-à-vis* the ascendancy of American power in the region and at the same time check the influence of the PCI in the new Italian forces establishment.<sup>2</sup> Finally, there was the desire for Italy to become a client state of the British arms industry through procurement from Britain of standardised equipment since this would perpetuate a reliance on Britain for equipment and

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<sup>1</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM1584/89/22, 13-5-1946, top secret, telegram, FAN 1135, SACMED to British Chiefs of Staff, 7-5-1946; letter, Ross to WO, 21-5-1946; FO 371/49890/ZM6285/243/22, 29-12-1945, minutes by Hood, 4-1-1946 and Ross, 8-1-1946; top secret, telegram, NAF 1103, SACMED to CCS, 21-12-1945; letter, FO to WO, 10-1-1946; AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (1st Draft), 'Italian Navy and Air Force', AFHQ (Mediterranean Planning Staff), 2-12-1945; top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', 15-12-1945; WO 204/3805, secret, letter, MoD to SACMED, 13-2-1946; Miller, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>2</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM315/187/22, 24-2-1946, telegram, no. 1350, FO to Washington, 11-2-1946; *ibid.*, ZM619/187/22, 21-2-1946, aide memoir for Bevin for his meeting with Ellery Stone: 'Police Mission', 20-2-1946; Miller, op. cit., p. 180.

reinforce the British export drive on which domestic hopes of economic up-turn had been based.<sup>3</sup>

British policy was also influenced by the following concerns: first, that the size and equipment of the interim Italian armed forces should not be seen as prejudicing the eventual shape of the military clauses of the Peace Treaty;<sup>4</sup> second, that although Britain was prepared to enter into financial commitments in the interests of building efficient armed forces for Italy, it was not willing to incur punitive financial burdens in the process of doing so;<sup>5</sup> and third, that the new Italian forces structure ought to be ready to uphold law and order quickly so that British forces could withdraw from Italy as soon as possible and thus comply with the reduced defence expenditure favoured by Prime Minister Attlee and his Chancellor Hugh Dalton.<sup>6</sup> For these reasons, Britain favoured the creation of lean and efficient Italian armed forces that would operate within

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<sup>3</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3152/89/22, 12-9-1946, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Esme Iredell, Western Department, 11-9-1946; CAB 66/67, CP(45)64, 5-7-1945.

<sup>4</sup>. FO 371/43951/R3835/1962/22, 10-3-1944, most secret, note by the Chief of Air Staff: 'Re-equipment of the Italian Air Force, 10-3-1944; *ibid.*, R11376/1962/22, 21-7-1944, top secret, British Chiefs of Staff, to JSM, 20-7-1944; FO 371/49889/ZM 2517/243/22, 8-5-1945, minute by Ross, 9-5-1945; top secret, telegram, MSW 657, Air Ministry to the Mediterranean HQ, 20-5-1945; *ibid.*, ZM2425/243/22, 30-4-1945, minute by Ross, 23-4-1945; top secret, letter, Churchill to Halifax, 22-4-1945.

<sup>5</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2983/89/22, 29-8-1946, letter, Air Forces Sub-Commission, AFHQ, to British Embassy, Rome 19-8-1946; FO 371/60604/ZM4197/89/22, 12-12-1946 secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Ward, acting Counsellor, British Embassy, Rome, 2-1-1947; FO 371/67793/Z1090/135/22, 18-12-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 2739, FO to Rome, 24-12-1947.

<sup>6</sup>. CAB 79/44, COS(46) 24th meeting, 13-2-1946; CAB 79/45, COS(46) 35th meeting, 6-3-1946; CAB 131/1, top secret, DO(46)5, 15-2-1946; *ibid.*, top secret, DO(46) 8, 18-3-1946; CAB 80/99, top secret, COS(46)5(O), 8-1-1946; *ibid.*, top secret, COS(46)9(O) Revise, 15-1-1946; FO 371/60564/ZM3164/35/22, 12-9-1946, minutes by Hankey, 20-4-1946, Warner, 21-9-1946; Lewis, J., *Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Strategic Defence, 1942-47*, London, 1987, pp. 128-135, 248-50 and 258-9; Pimlott, B., *Hugh Dalton*, London, 1985, pp. 498-9.

the parameters set by the Italian Peace Treaty,<sup>7</sup> that their size would also be proportionate to Italy's economic capacity to maintain them without external assistance but that at the same time

they must be large enough to maintain internal security and to defend Italy's frontiers particularly with YUGOSLAVIA (sic) [but]... they must NOT (sic) be strong enough to offer ITALY (sic) any prospect of attacking her neighbours or threaten the interests of the principal Allied Powers.<sup>8</sup>

The British government decided that its contribution to the reorganization of the Italian armed forces ought to take the form of a package deal providing training, technical advice and equipment and this was the arrangement that was put before the Italian government for their consideration and approval.<sup>9</sup>

In this present chapter, the following matters will be assessed: the contribution of Britain to the reconstruction of the Italian Armed Forces and the factors that impacted on its ability to implement its schemes such as its continuous financial problems throughout the second half of the 1940s and the fear that even if military equipment was provided to the Italians it could fall into the wrong hands if Italy went Communist.<sup>10</sup> The uncertainties as to precisely what

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<sup>7</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM1584/89/22, 13-5-1946, top secret, telegram, FAN 1135, SACMED to British Chiefs of Staff, 7-5-1946; letter, FO to WO, 21-5-1946; AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (1st Draft), 'Italian Navy and Airforce', Mediterranean Planning Staff, 2-12-1945; top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', 15-12-1945; FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946 secret, telegram, no. 516, FO to Washington, 22-11-1948.

<sup>8</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM89/89/22, 5-1-1946, top secret, telegram, FAN 621, COS to CCS, 20-12-1945; *ibid.*, ZM1062/89/22, 29-2-1948, minute by Ross, 25-3-1946; *ibid.*, ZM1584/89/22, 13-5-1946, top secret, telegram, FAN 1135, SACMED to British Chiefs of Staff, 7-5-1946; letter, A.D.M. Ross, FO to WO, 21-5-1946; AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', Mediterranean Planning Staff, 15-12-1945.

<sup>9</sup>. *Ibid.*, ZM4197/89/22, 12-12-1946 secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Ward, 2-1-1947; *ibid.*, ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, minute by Ross, 8-11-1946.

<sup>10</sup>. FO 371/73174/Z2823/274/22, 3-4-1948, letter, Brown to Ministry of Supply, 19-4-1948.



limitations the Peace Treaty would impose on the Italian armed forces<sup>11</sup> and the hesitations of the Italian government as to the best course of action to take to reconstruct its armed forces will be examined. Fears of Soviet intentions, the fact that the PCI was an integral part of all postwar Italian governments from 1944<sup>12</sup> and American indecisiveness and reluctance to cooperate with British plans for the reconstruction of the Italian armed forces will also be looked at.<sup>13</sup>

### **British perceptions of the security threats facing postwar Italy**

British perceptions of the threats the new Italian state would have to face and counter was to impact not only on the type of services Italy needed but also on the urgency with which the task would have to be accomplished. From as early as 1944, upon the return of Palmiro Togliatti to Rome, the strength of the PCI had surprised and concerned British policy makers. Such fears increased as time progressed because of the popularity of the party in the occupied North and the impact it could have on Italian politics after the eventual reunification of Italy.<sup>14</sup> Initial British fears were compounded by the as yet only partial

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<sup>11</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM1584/89/22, 13-5-1946, top secret, telegram, FAN 1135, SACMED to British Chiefs of Staff, 7-5-1946; letter, Ross, to WO, 21-5-1946; AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (1st Draft), 'Italian Navy and Airforce', Mediterranean Planning Staff, 2-12-1945; top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', 15-12-1945; FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, secret, telegram, no. 516, FO to Washington, 22-11-1946.

<sup>12</sup>. FO 371/60562/ZM975/35/22, 22-3-1946, top secret, FX 62994, CHQ.CMF to WO, undated; FO 371/67814/Z5748, Annual Report for 1946, 12-6-1947; Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 127-30; Miller, op. cit., pp. 191-3.

<sup>13</sup>. FRUS, 1945, Vol. IV, p. 1050-9; FRUS, 1946, Vol. III, pp. 867-79; FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, p. 950; FO 371/67791/Z599/135/22, 17-1-1947, minute by Ross, 20-1-1947; *ibid.*, ZZ1967/135/22, 24-2-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1702, FO to Washington, 22-2-1947; *ibid.*, Z2238/135/22, 3-3-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1308, Washington to FO, 1-3-1947. Miller, op. cit., pp. 191-2, 203, 215 and 230.

<sup>14</sup>. FO 371/43335/N2883/183/38, 12-5-1944, top secret, PHP(43)1(O), 24-4-1944; Arcidiacono, op. cit., pp. 239-266, *passim*; Ellwood, 'Al tramonto' pp. 75-92; Rothwell, op. cit., pp. 74-290, *passim*.

disarmament of the resistance after the liberation of the North. There was also the Italian population's tendency to erupt into violent internal disorders and overt demonstrations of hostility, even physical violence, against the occupation forces as an expression of the people's frustration with dire poverty and bleak prospects. Such disorders had occurred all over Italy in cities as diverse as Bari, Padua, Trieste and Venice to name but a few.<sup>15</sup> The net result of this situation was that the British and American governments formed the impression that the intention of Togliatti's PCI was to conspire to make a bid for power through a *coup d'état*.<sup>16</sup> These fears of a *coup d'état* were capitalised on by the Christian Democrats and conservative circles in Italy who time and again presented the legitimate protests of people demanding jobs and land as Communist inspired agitation which further exacerbated Western fears that were, in any case, heightened by the resurgence of the civil war in Greece.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the PCI had no real intention of seizing power through a revolution at this time. The British intervention in Greece left Togliatti with no doubts that a

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<sup>15</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/60562/ZM1285/35/22, 23-4-1946, letter, C-in-C, Mediterranean to Admiralty, 18-3-1946; FO 371/60565/ZM4210/35/22, 13-12-1946, important, telegram, 1827, Ward to FO, 12-12-1946; *ibid.*, ZM4220/35/22, 13-12-1946, important, telegram, 1830, 13-12-1946; *ibid.*, ZM4219/35/22, 14-12-1946, telegram, no. 377, Ward to FO, 13-12-1946; *ibid.*, ZM4317/35/22, 13-12-46, confidential, telegram, no.381, Ward to FO, 12-12-1946; FO 371/60563/ZM1604/35/22, 14-5-1946, confidential, C-in-C, Mediterranean, to Admiralty, 10-5-1946; *ibid.*, ZM1724/35/22, 23-5-1946, Parliamentary Question, by Mr. Sutcliffe, MP, 21-5-1946; FO 371/60713/ZM2514/1344/22, 18-7-1946, confidential, despatch, no. 369, Charles to Bevin, 18-7-1946; FO 371/67814/Z5748, Annual Report for 1946, 12-6-1947; FO 371/67731/Z118/22, 6-1-1947, confidential, telegram no. FX 73767, AFHQ to CCS, 19-12-1946, Piscitelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-88.

<sup>16</sup>. FO 371/60707/ZM2064/1344/22, 17-6-1946, top secret, telegram, no. 906, Clutton to FO, 18-6-1946; telegram, no. 202, Paris to FO, 16-6-1946; top secret, telegram, no. 528, Sofia to FO, 15-6-1946; top secret, telegram, no. 200, Bevin to Attlee, 15-6-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2065/1344/22, 17-6-1946, minute by Ross, 17-6-1946; Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 155; Ellwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-100, 127-34, 234-40, 167-98.

<sup>17</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. VI, pp. 877-8 and 887-9; FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, pp. 856-60 and 888-9; Ferraresi, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Murgia, P.G., *Il Vento del Nord: Storia e cronaca del fascismo dopo la resistenza, 1945-50*, Milano, 1975.

communist insurrection in Italy would precipitate a Western intervention with calamitous results for his party and country. He also did not wish to divide his country nor did he want to expose it to the misery that had befallen the Spaniards and which he had experienced at first hand as 'comrade Ercoli', the Comintern's man in Spain during the Civil War.<sup>18</sup> Togliatti adopted a constitutional approach and his principal tactical aim was to embed the PCI into the Italian political system by transforming it from a traditional cadres-based communist party into a mass party. A '*partito nuovo*' which could be capable of winning elections through the ballot-box. He demonstrated this tactic through the proclamation of the '*svolta di Salerno*', his loyal participation in all Cabinets from 1944 and in the PCI's efforts to restrain working class protest during these years.<sup>19</sup> Such actions were not taken at face value by the Foreign Office which viewed them with deep scepticism. The Foreign Office felt that a better measure of actual communist intentions in Italy was provided by the fact that the disarmament of partisans had been only partial and that the unaccounted for weaponry was known to have been tucked away for the mythical 'zero' hour'.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, even if such worries were inflated as G. Warner has observed, the 'communist threat' in Italy was not imaginary, because the PCI never disclaimed 'its desire to assume power' it simply renounced to use of

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<sup>18</sup>. Urban, J.B., *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party: from Togliatti to Berlinguer*, London, 1986, pp. 207-8, 211, 219-20; Sassoon, D., *The Strategy of the Italian Communist Party*, New York, 1981, pp. 65-6 and 73-8; Blackmer, D.L.M., 'Continuity and Change in Postwar Italian Communism', in Blackmer, D.L.M. and Tarrow, S. *Communism in Italy and France*, Princeton, 1975, pp. 48; Reale, E., *Nacsita del Cominform*, Milan, 1958, pp. 119-21. On the impact of Greece on Allied policy towards Italy see Delzell, C.F., *Mussolini's Enemies: the Italian anti-Fascist Resistance*, Princeton, 1961, pp. 464-8.

<sup>19</sup>. Allum, P. A., and Sassoon, D., 'Italy', in McCauley, (ed.), *Communist Power in Europe, 1944-49*, pp.169-178; Ginsborg, op. cit., pp. 79-88 and 105-15; Gambino, op. cit., pp. 104 and 387; Bocca, op. cit., p. 401.

<sup>20</sup>. Miller, op. cit., p. 140.

insurrectionary means to attain it'.<sup>21</sup>

The June 1946 referendum on the 'institutional question' and the simultaneous elections for a Constituent Assembly were carried out in a tense atmosphere and amidst rumours that possible Yugoslav, or even Russian invasions and civil war were imminent.<sup>22</sup> Although these rumours proved to be unfounded the outcome of these elections offered little solace to the West. It revealed not only the extent of the appeal of the parties of the Left but also the dramatic increase in the membership of the PCI.<sup>23</sup> The elections for the Constituent Assembly had shown that should Italian Socialists and Communists combine their forces the prize of government and with it, the political transformation of Italy according to the ideals of the Italian Resistance, was within their reach. When news of the reconfirmation of the 'Unity of Action Pact' between the PCI and the PSIUP emerged on 25 October 1946 and which gave rise to rumours of an impending 'fusion' of the parties of the Left, the Foreign Office which was already unsettled by these developments became positively alarmed. London decided that the Italian internal security forces had to be built up immediately to attain a degree of efficiency which would enable them to meet head-on and deflect a subversion of Italy's pro-western course. This concern was apparent at the CFM meetings during June 1946 when Bevin consistently supported high

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<sup>21</sup>. Warner, G., 'Italy and the Powers' in Woolf, S., (ed.), *The Rebirth of Italy, 1943-50*, London, 1972, pp. 46-7.

<sup>22</sup>. FO 371/60707/ZM2064/1344/22, 17-6-1946, top secret, telegram, no. 906, Clutton to FO, 18-6-1946; telegram, no. 202, Paris to FO, 16-6-1946; top secret, telegram, no. 528, Sofia to FO, 15-6-1946; top secret, telegram, no. 200, Bevin to Attlee, 15-6-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2065/1344/22, 17-6-1946, minute by Ross, 17-6-1946.

<sup>23</sup>. Miler, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40; Travis, D., 'Communism and Resistance in Italy, 1943-8' in Judt, T., (ed.), *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe, 1939-48*, London, 1989, p. 216.

ceilings for the Italian police force.<sup>24</sup>

The deep concerns over Italy's internal security were compounded by worries over the security of its borders from an external attack. Post-Fascist Italy found itself in a neighbourhood of few friends and with neighbours who still bore fresh wounds from Fascist Italy's aggression. Despite this, of its neighbours, only Yugoslavia constituted a possible threat to Italy's territorial integrity during the 1940s and Yugoslavia was a communist state. The Italo-Yugoslav rift over Italy's North-Eastern border and the future of Trieste and of Venezia Giulia was soon identified as potential flashpoint between East and West.<sup>25</sup> Venezia Giulia was an area of mixed Italian and Slavic population. Enmity and ethnic rivalry between the two groups was traditional.<sup>26</sup> For the Italian nationalist the Giulian plain was an integral part of Italy even when the ethnic make up of the region as a whole could not support such a claim outright. The incorporation of this area into Italy had been the *raison d'être* for Italian entry into the First World War on the *Entente* side. The failure by the Italians to gain the whole territory at the Peace Settlement in 1919 led to the myth of the 'mutilated victory' which rekindled nationalistic feelings in Italy and contributed greatly to the establishment of Mussolini's Fascist dictatorship in 1922.<sup>27</sup> Bad feeling among

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<sup>24</sup>. FO 371/60710/ZM2239/1344/22, 26-6-1946, letter, Bevin to De Gasperi, June 1946; *ibid.*, ZM2272/1344/22, 29-6-1946, minute by Sargent, 29-6-1946; telegram, no. 6, Paris, UK Delegation to Rome, 28-6-1946; Gambino, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-218; Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 192; Mammarella, *op. cit.*, p. 117. The first pact had been signed in Paris in 1934.

<sup>25</sup>. Rabel, *Between East and West*, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Novak, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-239, *passim*.

<sup>26</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-42.

<sup>27</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-5; Cassels, A., *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, Princeton, 1979, p. 10; Salvemini, G., *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy: Volume I: Origins and Practices*, London, 1928, pp.15-54, *passim*; De Grand, A., *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development*, London, 1989, pp. 25-6; Rabel, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-6.

the two communities had been exacerbated by Mussolini's brutal occupation of Yugoslavia.<sup>28</sup> For the Yugoslavs the incorporation of Trieste and its surrounding hinterland was a means of bringing all the South Slavs within the confines of their own nation-state. Tito's partisan advance had repelled the German occupiers northwards and westwards towards Trieste, the city-port on the Adriatic which was itself a main issue of contention between Italians and Yugoslavs and which both claimed as rightfully theirs. Trieste was liberated simultaneously by Allied and Yugoslav troops in the closing days of the Second World War. During those last and difficult days tensions ran high. Allied troops and Yugoslav partisans faced each other in a war of nerves. The West insisted that Yugoslavia should relinquish its occupation of Trieste as it would prejudice the final outcome of the territorial clauses of the Peace Treaty with Italy. All out war over the Trieste issue was averted simply because Yugoslavia, discouraged by Stalin's lack of support, bowed to Western pressure and agreed reluctantly in May 1945 to accept Allied Military Government control of the city until the Peace Treaty had been finalized and signed. Thus Venezia Giulia, was divided into two zones. 'Zone A' contained Trieste and its environs and was administered by the Allies. 'Zone B' contained the rest of the region and was administered by Yugoslavia. The Trieste issue remained unresolved until 1954.<sup>29</sup> Thus, from May 1945 up to the Tito/Stalin split in summer 1948, the Western Allied Forces and the Yugoslavs faced each other along the boundary between Zones 'A' and 'B' in an increasingly tense and fragile

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<sup>28</sup>. Novak, op. cit., pp. 49-69; BBC, Timewatch, *Fascist Legacy: A Promise Unfulfilled*, Part: I, Elstree, 1989; Palumbo, M., 'Genocidio all' Italiana', *Epoca*, 17-1-1988; Yugoslav State Official Publication, *Italian War Crimes in Yugoslavia*, Belgrade, 1945.

<sup>29</sup>. Harris, op. cit., pp. 340-1; Rabel, op. cit., pp. 5-7; Novak, op. cit., pp. 90-1, 198 and 240-471, passim.

atmosphere of constant flare-ups and border incidents.<sup>30</sup> The veneer of old Allied camaraderie was becoming dented not only by the entrenched positions adopted by both the Yugoslavs and Italians but also by the strains of the emerging Cold War. In view of the inability of Yugoslavia to take on the West single-handedly the British concluded that Yugoslavia would not dare to use force against Italy to resolve territorial issues without having first secured the prior agreement of the Soviet Union and a 'go-ahead' from Stalin. The Foreign Office decided that minor incidents in the region could be discounted as the result of ethnic tensions or a hotheaded Yugoslav reaction but any major incident could only be the product of Soviet making and incitement.<sup>31</sup> In which case, the Foreign Office predicted, any major incident in the area could end up as 'war with capital W'.<sup>32</sup>

In the immediate post-war climate Italy's internal and external security problems were perceived as one problem which was the result of an orchestrated Soviet campaign to wear down the West rather than two distinct problems. As a result, fears about communist intentions and designs on Italy's security meant that British decision-makers were absorbed with Italy's current political problems and less concerned with its Fascist past. Any lingering doubts that had initially existed about how far the British government should go

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<sup>30</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/72482/R380/44/70, 9-1-1948, secret, despatch, no. 1, 'Annual Report on Trieste', Sullivan, political advisor, Trieste, to Bevin, 1-1-1948; FO 371/72619/R3083/3083/92, 8-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 423, Sir Victor Mallet, the British Ambassador, Rome to FO, 6-3-1948; *ibid.*, R4617/3038/92, 14-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 349, Sir Charles B.P. Peake, the British Ambassador in Belgrade to FO, 12-4-1948; *ibid.*, R5302/3038/92, 29-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 742, Mallet to FO, 28-4-1948; FO 371/60708/2064/1344/22, 17-6-1946, top secret, telegram, no. 906, Clutton to FO, 18-6-1946.

<sup>31</sup>. Lane, *Britain, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity*, p. 59.

<sup>32</sup>. FO 371/60564/ZM3164/35/22, 12-9-1946, minutes by Ross, 24-9-1946, Warner, 21-9-1946 and R.M.A. Hankey, head of the Northern Department, 20-9-1946.

in re-arming an 'ex-enemy' state were dispelled by the marked deterioration in relations between East and West, the identification of the Soviet Union as a potential future enemy which would endanger British interests in the region and also by the May-June 1945 crisis over Trieste. The conclusion was drawn that for a pro-Western Italian government to survive after the withdrawal of the Allied Forces it would need to have the back up of efficient armed forces.<sup>33</sup>

### **Britain and the birth of the post-fascist Italian army**

From the moment of the signing of the Long Armistice Terms, in September 1943, the occupation forces attempted to create a rudimentary army structure for the new Italian state.<sup>34</sup> As every aspect of the *Regno del Sud* was in chaos such a task was not an easy one. Nothing of the old military structure of Italy remained; there was no organization and few records. The war had inflicted savage losses on it and in addition approximately one million of its former combatants were detained as POWs in various countries. Italy found itself divided into two after its capitulation. Similarly, the remaining rump of the Italian army that was loyal to the 'cobelligerent' regime of the South, the King and Badoglio came under the direct control of the Allied Command, in contrast, the forces in the North which remained loyal to Mussolini, obeyed the *Salò* Republic Command, a front for the Wehrmacht.<sup>35</sup> Above all, however,

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<sup>33</sup>. Lewis, op. cit., pp. 128-135 and 258-9; Arcidiacono, op. cit., pp. 239-266, passim; Ellwood, 'Al tramonto' pp. 75-92; Rothwell, op. cit., pp. 74-290, passim; FO 371/43951/R11376/1962/22, 21-7-1944, top secret, telegram, no. COS(W)182, COS to JSM, 20-7-1944; WO 204/3814, top secret, telegram, NAF 1051, Alexander to CCS, 3-8-1945; FO 371/43335/N2883/183/38, 12-5-1944, top secret, PHP(43)1(O), 24-4-1944; FO 371/49889/ZM2425/243/22, 30-4-1945 minute by Ross, 23-4-1945.

<sup>34</sup>. FO 371/49954/ZM4139/2273/22, 1-8-1945, minutes by Ross, 7-8-1945 and Hoyer-Millar, 8-8-1945; memorandum by Major General Browning, undated; FO 371/49889/ZM3288/243/22, 17-6-1945, telegram, no. 126, Charles to FO, 8-9-1945.

<sup>35</sup>. Clark, op. cit., pp. 302-10; For the RSI see: Anfuso, F., *Roma, Berlino, Salò, 1936-1945*, Milano, 1950; Bertoldi, S., *Contro Salò*, Milano,



successive and humiliating defeats during the war had deeply eroded the Army's morale and had diminished it in the eyes of ordinary Italians.<sup>36</sup>

The task of equipping and reorganising a new Army for the *Regno* fell on British shoulders because of Britain's numerical superiority in the Mediterranean theatre and because of its role as a 'senior partner' within the liberating forces in the early stages of the Allied occupation of Italy.<sup>37</sup> The British government under pressure from Field Marshall Sir Henry M. Wilson, SACMED, endorsed the reconstruction and re-equipment of the Italian armed forces and on 30 August 1944, Churchill made this decision public.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, the British military in Italy undertook to transform the few disparate service units they had organised in 1943 into fighting units. This was mainly because they wanted to free up some of their own units to fight against the Germans at the Western Front and to boost the confidence of the South.<sup>39</sup> Italian Generals were brought in from POW camps in England and India to head this embryonic structure which was centred around the rudimentary Italian Ministry of War at Lecce in Southern Italy.<sup>40</sup> By the end of the war, Major

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1984; Bocca, G., *La repubblica di Mussolini*, Bari, 1977; Deakin, F. W., *Storia della Repubblica di Salò*, Torino, 1963; Degli Espinosa, A., *Il Regno del Sud*, Roma, 1946; Tamaro, A., *Due anni di storia, 1943-45*, Vol. II, Roma, 1948.

<sup>36</sup>. Ellwood, *Italy*, op. cit., pp. 40-3, 73, 80-4, 88-9, 96, and 167; Miller, op. cit., pp. 84-8, 91-2 and 189.

<sup>37</sup>. FO 371/43951/R6165/1962/22, 18-4-1945, top secret, telegram, FAN 356, CCS to Wilson, 10-4-1944; Varsori, ' "Senior" o "Equal" Partner' pp. 229-60, passim; Miller, op. cit., 145.

<sup>38</sup>. FO 371/43951/R13067/1962/22, 23-8-1944, minute by Williams, 30-8-1944; top secret, telegram, FAN 387, CCS to AFHQ, 10-8-1944.

<sup>39</sup>. WO 204/3809, secret, letter, MMIA to AFHQ, 6-2-1945; top secret, telegram, FAN 487, CCS to SACMED, 31-1-1945.

<sup>40</sup>. FO 371/43951/R13067/1962/22, 12-9-1944, minute by Williams, 30-8-1944; top secret, telegram, FAN 387, CCS to AFHQ, 10-8-1944; *ibid.*, R17955/1962/22, 6-11-1944, top secret, memorandum, by Browning, 4-10-1944; top secret, letter, Charles to Sargent, 30-10-1944.

General Browning, the GOC of the British dominated Allied Military Mission to the Italian Army (MMIA), had succeeded in creating five battalions of which four had seen action and which according to his own testament had excelled themselves in battle against the Germans and had shown that 'under proper direction and assistance the Italians could be of great value as soldiers'.<sup>41</sup>

Despite Browning's ringing endorsement of the re-establishment of the Italian military structure as a 'unique feature in the history of war', by the time of the liberation of the whole of the Italian peninsula, this new force was still ill-equipped, badly organised, demoralised and alienated from the very people it was supposed to serve. Up to this time the British had been the main provider of equipment and training but their efforts to equip the interim Italian armed forces up to the end of the war had not been very successful because of lack of equipment and resources due to the exigencies of the overall war effort and also because, initially, there had been doubts about how far Britain should go in re-arming an 'ex-enemy' state.<sup>42</sup> Liberation in April 1945, brought with it the collapse of Mussolini's neo-fascist republic, the eventual dissolution of the AMG regime and the restoration to direct Italian government jurisdiction of all Italy with the exclusion of the disputed areas of Alto Adige and Venezia Giulia, but it did not bring about the unification of all Italian services under a single command. The army and the *Carabinieri* were returned to Italian control in December 1945 but the Italian navy and air force still remained under the

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<sup>41</sup>. FO 371/43951/R11376/1962/22, 21-7-1944, top secret, telegram, no. COS(W)182, COS to JSM, 20-7-1944; FO 371/49954/ZM4139/2273/22, 1-8-1945, minutes by Ross, 7-8-1945 and Hoyer-Millar, 8-8-1945; memorandum by Major General Browning, MMIA, undated; WO 204/2659, report by the Air Forces Subcommittee of the Allied Commission, 8-2-1945; FO 371/49889/ZM2517/243/22, 8-5-1945, top secret, telegram, MS 8257, Mediterranean Allied Air Forces HQ to Air Ministry, 5-5-1945; Stato Maggiore dell' Esercito - Ufficio Storico, *I gruppi di combattimento Cremona, Friuli, Folgere, Legnano, Mantova, Piceno, 1944-45*, Roma, 1973.

<sup>42</sup>. WO 204/3814, top secret, telegram, NAF 1059, Alexander to CCS, 22-8-1945.

control of General Morgan for both administrative and operational purposes.<sup>43</sup> As if this state of affairs did not cause enough disorganisation, in the aftermath of liberation, some army units disbanded themselves voluntarily and spontaneously which created confusion and further disorganized an already chaotic military structure.<sup>44</sup>

The new Italian army was the heir to the failures of the fascist military forces because, in reality, *epurazione* (epuration, the purge of fascists) proved to be but a cosmetic exercise which left the military establishment along with the judiciary as the least purged institutions.<sup>45</sup> Its lacklustre reputation had moreover, to compete with the popularity of the partisan units which were perceived by many in Italy as a successful force of brave liberators.<sup>46</sup> By spearheading the struggle against the *Salò* Republic and the Nazis in the North, the partisan brigades - the bulk of which were under PCI control - had fired the imagination of the Italian people. This was in stark contrast with the armed forces which along with other institutions of the 'old right' had been tainted by collaborationism with Fascism and the King whom Britain, under Churchill, had patronized despite the adverse opinion of the Foreign Office and

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<sup>43</sup>. AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', Mediterranean Planning Staff, 15-12-1945.

<sup>44</sup>. Ellwood, op. cit., 144-8, 192, 232 and 237; Miller, op. cit., pp. 50 and 159-60.

<sup>45</sup>. WO 204/2659, report, by the Air Forces Subcommittee of the Allied Commission, 9-10-1944; Ilari, V. *Le forze armate tra politica e potere*, Firenze, 1978, p. 19; D'Orsi, A., *Il potere repressivo: La macchina militare: Le forze armate in Italia*, Milano, 1972, pp. 7-19; Ceva, L., 'Le Forze Armate', in Galasso, G., (ed), *Storia della società italiana dall'unità ad oggi*, Vol. 11, Torino, 1981, p. 376; Delzell, op. cit., p. 554; Ilari, V., op. cit., p.14-5; Cerquetti, E., *Le forze armate italiane dal 1945 al 1975: Strutture e dottrine*, Milano, 1975, p.11; Ferraresi, op. cit., pp. 18-21; Domenico, op. cit., pp. 207-8; Gambino, op. cit., pp. 253-6; Battaglia, op. cit., pp. 347-8; Mercuri, *L'Epurazione*, op. cit., p. 185; Miller, op. cit., pp. 133-7.

<sup>46</sup>. Miller, op. cit., p. 138, 143-5 and 194; Delzell, op. cit., pp. 341-6.

the Americans.<sup>47</sup> When the war ended the Allies feared the potential firepower of the communist controlled partisan units and they decided to frustrate Togliatti's initiative for the automatic enlisting of such units to the army by banning the absorption of whole units. Armed units of the Resistance had first to be disarmed, demobilized and 'screened' and only then could individual 'rehabilitated partisans' join.<sup>48</sup> This did very little in either rehabilitating the standing Army in the eyes of ordinary Italians or in improving the state of the forces. More significantly, such action only served to compound the traditional rift that had existed between ordinary Italians and an army which had developed in parallel and with little interaction with Italian society and which had been used by the State since 1871 as a means of repressing civil disturbances through the use of excessive force.<sup>49</sup>

A greater problem for the armed forces surfaced after June 1946 with the abolition of the Monarchy and the establishment of the First Italian Republic. The Italian army had a special and complex relationship with the Monarchy. Throughout its history, it had succeeded in serving all Italian governments irrespective of their political complexion, by adopting the doctrine of 'apoliticism'. The army derived its legitimacy not from the people but from the 'military-political complex' at the pivot of which stood the House of Savoy. It

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<sup>47</sup>. Churchill, W.S., *Closing the Ring*, London, 1954, pp. 136, 156-8, and 391-3; Ellwood, *Italy*, op. cit., pp. 40-3, 73, 80-4, 88-9, 96, and 167; Miller, op. cit., pp. 84-8, 91-2, and 189; Delzell, C.F., 'Allied Policy towards Liberated Italy, 1943-44: repetition of Darlanism or Renewal of Democracy?', *Conspectus of History*, 1, 1975, pp. 32-6.

<sup>48</sup>. Miller, op. cit., pp. 140, 143, and 156; WO 204/2794, letter, MMIA to Ministry of War, 16-5-1945; WO 204/2797, top secret, SAC(P)(44)161, text of agreement between Bonomi government and *Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale Alta Italia* (CLNAI), 7-12-1944.

<sup>49</sup>. Ilari, op. cit., pp. 11-3; Gooch, J., *Army, State and Society in Italy, 1870-1915*, London, 1989, pp.173-5; Rochat, G., *L' esercito italiano da Vittorio Veneto a Mussolini, 1919-25*, Bari, 1967, passim; ditto, 'La crisi delle forze armate nel 1943-1945', in *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, Vol, 7, 1978, passim.

carried out the orders of the state but it did not owe its loyalty directly to the state but to the King. With the Monarchy gone, the whole relationship between army and the state had to change radically but how it was to change was not exactly clear.<sup>50</sup>

Such problems were compounded by reports, in May 1946, that the condition of the Italian land forces which had passed to Italian control and responsibility on December 1945, was one of apparent deterioration. The reports identified the reasons for this as being the lack of equipment, vehicles and spare parts. This was due to the fact that most of the equipment of the Italian army came either from indigenous sources or through the Allied disposal agencies and was made of inferior and obsolete material. The Italian government was so pressed for the few resources it had or was given by the allies that it poured them into civil rehabilitation and not military use.<sup>51</sup> The problems of reconstructing the Italian armed forces were further exacerbated by the uncertainties and ceilings a future Peace Treaty would impose.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>. Ibid.; Mammarella, op. cit., pp. 108-19 and 134-8; Ilari, op. cit., p. 19; D'Orsi, *La macchina*, op. cit. pp. 7-19; Ceva, 'Le Forze Armate', op. cit., p. 376; Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies*, op. cit., p. 554.

<sup>51</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM217/89/22, 15-1-1946, secret, letter, FO to Air Ministry, 19-1-1946; *ibid.*, ZM89/89/22, 5-1-1946, minute by Ross, 5-1-1946; FO 371/60604/ZM3152/89/22, 12-9-1946, letter, FO to Admiralty, 19-9-1946; Miller, op. cit, p. 191.

<sup>52</sup>. FO 371/43951/R3835/1962/22, 10-3-1944, most secret, note by the Chief of Air Staff: 'Re-equipment of the Italian Air Force, 10-3-1944; *ibid.*, R11376/1962/22, 21-7-1944, top secret, British Chiefs of Staff, to JSM, 20-7-1944; FO 371/49889/ZM 2517/243/22, 8-5-1945, minute by Ross, 9-5-1945; top secret, telegram, MSW 657, Air Ministry to the Mediterranean HQ, 20-5-1945; *ibid.*, ZM2425/243/22, 30-4-1945, minute by Ross, 23-4-1945; top secret, letter, Churchill to Halifax, 22-4-1945; FO 371/60602/ZM1584/89/22, 13-5-1946, top secret, telegram, FAN 1135, SACMED to British Chiefs of Staff, 7-5-1946; letter, Ross, FO to WO, 21-5-1946; AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (1st Draft), 'Italian Navy and Airforce', Mediterranean Planning Staff, 2-12-1945; top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', 15-12-1945; FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, secret, telegram, no. 516, FO to Washington, 22-11-1946; Ilari, op. cit., pp. 13-20.

The realization of this state of affairs led to the adoption by Britain of a more vigorous and interventionist approach towards Italian military matters.<sup>53</sup> By the end of the war Britain had become inextricably involved in the reconstruction effort for the Italian armed forces and was extremely well placed to continue with this role. Of the standing Italian army which totalled 368,000 men, 272,000 were supplied by the Allies of which 160,000 soldiers, including 10,000 Carabinieri, were supplied by the British, 83,000 by the USA and the rest by various international commitments. Of what was but a skeleton air force, the British supplied three out of four existing squadrons<sup>54</sup> and what had been saved of the Italian Fascist navy was supplied solely with British fuel and stores.<sup>55</sup> Italy lacked both the administrative and financial resources to undertake the task of reconstructing her own armed forces alone. In addition, American surpluses in Italy, were not sufficient to meet the Italian army's requirements.<sup>56</sup> The Americans still viewed the Mediterranean as a British sphere of influence and up until the second half of 1946 they did not pose a serious threat to British involvement in Italy. Indeed, the British government, at this stage, was happy to encourage the Americans to get more involved in sharing some of the crippling financial burdens it was incurring through its commitments to the Italian military.<sup>57</sup> For the purposes of maintaining standardization it was decided that Britain would have to continue equipping

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<sup>53</sup>. PREM 8/66, ORC(45)23, COS(45)189th mtg., 29-8-1945; Miller, op. cit., 192; FRUS, 1945, Vol. IV, pp. 1050-51; Lewis, op. cit., pp. 128-135 and 258-9; Ellwood, 'Al tramonto', pp. 75-86.

<sup>54</sup>. Nuti, L., *L' esercito italiano*, pp. 12-45.

<sup>55</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, pp. 917-8, 940-1 and 950; Miller, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>56</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM217/89/22, 15-1-1946, secret, letter, FO to Air Ministry, 19-1-1946; *ibid.*, 60602/ZM89/89/22, 5-1-1946, minute by Ross, 5-1-1946; FO 371/60604/ZM3152/89/22, 12-9-1946, letter, FO to Admiralty, 19-9-1946; Miller, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>57</sup>. Miller, op. cit., 191-5; FO 371/60563/ZM2639/35/22, 3-8-1946, minute by Sargent to the PM, 8-7-1946.

the interim Italian forces since most of their equipment was British already.<sup>58</sup> Thus, the task of equipping and training the Italian army from 1944 and throughout 1947 was assumed mainly by Britain.

The approach Britain took in order to achieve its aims up to the signing of the Peace Treaty was through the provision of training and equipment to the Italian military services through the Allied Military Mission to the Italian Army (MMIA). Once the Treaty had been concluded Britain hoped to convince the Italian government to invite the Allies to furnish military missions to each of its services. The idea of missions to the Italian services was not a new one. It was based on the continuation of the close relationship fostered between the Italian Services and the British element in the MMIA during the period of co-belligerency. Its conception was directly attributable to the wartime National government. In August 1945, the incoming Labour government in an attempt to underpin the Italian Prime Minister, Ferruccio Parri, and to secure a stake in Italian reconstruction proposed to him the strengthening of his security forces through the attachment of missions.<sup>59</sup> The Italian government, however, refused to accept missions which excluded the third Ally, the USSR. Parri, a creature of anti-fascism and the Resistance was not prepared to undermine the cohesion of his government nor did he wish to antagonise the Soviets prior to the conclusion of the Peace Treaty negotiations. He felt that the Armistice terms precluded the acceptance of such proposals.<sup>60</sup> In any case, the fact that

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<sup>58</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM217/89/22, 15-1-1946, secret, letter, FO to Air Ministry, 19-1-1946; *ibid.*, ZM89/89/22, 5-1-1946, minute by Ross, 5-1-1946; FO 371/60604/ZM3152/89/22, 12-9-1946, letter, FO to Admiralty, 19-9-1946; Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>59</sup>. FO 371/49771/ZM3214/3/22, 12-6-1945, minute by Harvey, 1-7-1945.

<sup>60</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM592/187/22, 20-2-1946, letter, Sargent to Sir, A. Street, Control Office for Germany and Austria, WO, 1-3-1946, 30-8-1946; *ibid.*, ZM619/187/22, 21-2-1946, memorandum briefing the Secretary of State prior to his meeting with Admiral Stone, 20-2-1946; Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

the British proposal came to Parri via Chief Commissioner Stone could not have helped matters particularly since both Stone, personally, and the State Department were rather unhappy with the British proposals.<sup>61</sup> The British government let the issue drop for the time being because they did not wish to impose the matter on the Italian government and it was thought to be only a matter of time before the Italians invited missions voluntarily.<sup>62</sup>

With the replacement of Parri by De Gasperi, the end of Allied Administration and the dissolution of the Armistice regime, the British felt more confident of success because of De Gasperi's anti-communism and his pessimistic view of Italy's internal security situation.<sup>63</sup> Bevin and the Western Department were particularly supportive of the missions idea because it seemed to offer the best way forward in helping the Italian government maintain internal security and at the same time seamlessly adapting and perpetuating British involvement from the reconstruction of the interim Italian forces stage into the post-treaty period.<sup>64</sup> The Service Departments too, were supportive of the idea. When they were approached by the Foreign Office to give their thoughts and approval to the plan their response was uniformly in favour because they had concluded that:

from the strategic aspect of view it is important to keep the Italians looking West rather than East for advice and assistance

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<sup>61</sup>. WO 204/2261, Item 9, SACMED to Stone, 21-8-1945; Stone to SACMED, 21-9-1945; WO 204/2267, top secret, telegram, NAF 1051, Stone to Chiefs of Staff, 27-9-1945; Miller, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>62</sup>. WO 204/2267, top secret, telegram, NAF 1051, Stone to COS, 27-9-1945; letter, Stone to SACMED, 19-9-1945.

<sup>63</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/60622/ZM187/187/22, 12-1-1946, secret, letter, WO to FO, 20-8-1946; FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, secret, letter, Brigadier General C.S. Sudgen, WO, to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946.

<sup>64</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, memorandum by Ross, 'Missions to the Italian Army' 8-9-1946; minute by Warner, 25-11-1946; FO 371/60622/ZM618/187/22, 21-2-1946, minutes by Harvey, 18-2-1946 and Hoyer-Millar, 19-2-1946.



in the training of their Army ... it would be a pity after all the pains we have taken to reorganize along British lines if we were suddenly to withdraw our assistance.<sup>65</sup>

This time however, extra care was taken to ensure the success of the plans. The Foreign Office instructed the Rome Embassy and British element of the AFHQ at Caserta to keep this decision secret from Admiral Ellery Stone because it wanted the opportunity to put its case directly to the State Department first and not to have it filtered by Stone's anti-British slant.<sup>66</sup> On 5 February 1946, London presented to its American Allies its first step in the process of attaching missions to the Italian services by unveiling plans for attaching a British-only police mission to the Italian internal security forces on the grounds of improving administrative efficiency. The British proposals were presented by Bevin, a warm supporter of the police mission idea. When Stone approached him to complain, Bevin brushed aside his objections in an abrupt and brusque manner.<sup>67</sup> On 23 May 1946, Sir Orme Sargent, Deputy Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office, met Niccolò Carandini, the Italian Ambassador to the Court of St. James', and asked him about his country's attitude towards the police mission. Carandini assured Sargent that he would press the urgency of the matter to the Italian government but could not say anything more

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<sup>65</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, secret, letter, Sudgen to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946.

<sup>66</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM336/187/22, 28-1-1946, telegram, no. 129, Rome to FO, 25-1-1946; *ibid.*, ZM187/187/22, 12-1-1946, minute by Ross, 11-1-1946; *ibid.*, ZM275/187/22, 21-1-1946, minute by Ross, 21-1-1946.

<sup>67</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM1728/187/22, 23-5-1946, minute by Ross, 7-5-1946; *ibid.*, ZM3914/187/22, 22-11-1946, secret, telegram, no. 1355, FO to Washington, 22-11-1946.

positive.<sup>68</sup>

Although the aim was to have a mission per service, British interest inevitably focused on the internal security forces and on the Italian air force. This was because of the perceived threat that the 'red menace' posed to British interests and because an air-mission was regarded to be the most lucrative from the procurement point of view. It was precisely because of the severe British concerns about the ability of the Italian police forces to uphold the law and public order which prompted British contemplation for the planting of a covert police mission to the Italian police forces even whilst the De Gasperi government was still considering the issue. The idea had been fermenting in the Foreign Office since January 1946. The plan was to attach police officers to the existing MMIA without the prior approval of the Italian government and without even consulting with it. The implementation of this plan was delayed as a result of the pleas of Sir Noel Charles and General Morgan who both feared that should the presence of such a mission be revealed it would make the position of De Gasperi untenable and because, in any case, they genuinely believed that the Italians would soon answer in the affirmative. However, by April 1946, London had done all the waiting it was willing to do and gave the go ahead for the infiltration of the MMIA by British police officers whose main task would be to advise and train the *Carabinieri*, the militarised arm of the Italian police and which was for operational purposes under the control of the Ministry

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<sup>68</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM3560/187/22, 15-10-1946, secret, letter, Charles to Harvey, 8-10-1946; secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Ward, 2-11-1946; *ibid*, ZM3914/187/22, 22-11-1946, secret, telegram, no. 1355, FO to Washington, 22-11-1946; FO 371/60604/ZM4197/89/22, 12-12-1946, telegram, no. 1822, Ward to FO, 11-12-1946; secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Ward, 2-1-1947; secret, telegram, no. 12001, FO to Washington, 1-1-1947.

of War.<sup>69</sup> The other task for the British infiltrators apart from assisting the *Carabinieri*, was to 'expand the extent of their influence to other police forces' and assist the Italian government to 'summon up sufficient courage to ask them to stay on as a full blown police mission'.<sup>70</sup>

Similarly, the British were particularly interested in the procurement of equipment to the Italian air force. The Italian air force had been grounded in the post-armistice period although some of its units were still active under Allied control and had been employed to help the Allies overcome manpower problems in the Italian theatre of war. From 1943 to 1946, the Italian air force was administered at a post-armistice nominal strength of 100,000 men although only 31,000 were on the active list. The British felt that the air force had to be re-organised and rationalized before the Peace Settlement for two reasons: first, because of the unnecessary burden it posed on the Italian Air Ministry due to its onerous financial costs and second, to get the Italians psychologically accustomed to the fact that their air force would be reduced in the post-treaty period to a mere ghost of its pre-war strength.<sup>71</sup>

In the light of these considerations SACMED produced a paper which he submitted to the UK and US governments and in which he proposed that the interim Italian air force personnel should not exceed 15,000 men as he was

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<sup>69</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM187/187/22, 12-1-1946, telegram, no. 566, FO to Rome, 14-12-1946; *ibid.*, ZM1178/187/22, 10-4-1946, minute by Ross, 8-4-1946; letter, COS to JSM, 17-4-1946; FO 371/60602/1227/89/22, 15-4-1946, minutes by Harvey and Ross, 16-4-1946; letter, Carandini to Harvey, 16-4-1946; FO 371/60603/ZM2643/89/22, 30-7-1946, secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar, to Sudgen, 30-7-1946.

<sup>70</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM1091/89/22, 2-4-1946, letter, Sargent to General Sir H.C.B. Wemyss, WO, 1-4-1946.

<sup>71</sup>. AIR 23/6343, memorandum for the Chairman of the Mediterranean Joint Planning Staff, 16-11-1945; AIR 23/6344, notes on discussions on Italian Air Force at the Air Ministry, January 1946; AIR 23/8409, appendix, 'IAF Personnel Situation', 1-4-1946.

certain that the Russians would never agree to higher numbers.<sup>72</sup> He proposed that the future operational status and role of the Italian air force had to be determined by the following criteria: first, that their size should be small enough for the Italian government to be able to maintain it in an efficient state; second, that no Italian government could ever again be able to use it as an aggressive force that could threaten the security of its neighbours and the imperial lines of communications and, third, that it should be strong enough to deter aggression on Italy, to assist the land forces in the maintenance of internal security and help the Allies to safeguard Italy's frontiers'.<sup>73</sup>

Once Morgan's proposals were accepted the next task was to determine the exact size of the air force. The British felt that a leaner air force could be trained and equipped to achieve a high degree of efficiency and be ready to assume the responsibility of defending the country when the Allied Forces were withdrawn according to the provisions of the Treaty.<sup>74</sup> At the same time, the overriding factor determining the size of the Italian air force was to be the economic ability of Italy to maintain it as well as its other forces and that it could fulfil its obligations as set out by the Treaty. It was decided that the equipping of the air force and the parts of its combat aircraft should be of Allied

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<sup>72</sup>. AIR 23/6344, top secret, telegram, NAF 1169, SACMED to CCS and British Chiefs of Staff, 26-6-1946; top secret, telegram, FAN 697, CCS to SACMED, 10-10-1946; FO 60602/ZM1885/89/22, 3-6-1946, secret, letter, COS(W)308, COS to JSM, 1-6-1946.

<sup>73</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/60602/ZM174/89/22, 1-1-1946, British Chiefs of Staff to JSM, 10-1-1946; *ibid.*, ZM679/89/22, 27-2-1946, top secret, telegram, NAF 1117, SACMED to British Chiefs of Staff, 22-2-1946; letter, Ross to WO, 4-3-1946; FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, secret, letter, Sudgen to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946; FRUS, 1945, Vol. IV, p. 1017-18, 1050-1 and 1059.

<sup>74</sup>. AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', Mediterranean Planning Staff, 15-12-1945; AIR 23/6344, top secret, telegram, NAF 1169, SACMED to CCS and British Chiefs of Staff, 26-6-1946; FO 371/60602/ZM1584/89/22, 13-5-1946 minutes by Ross and Hoyer-Millar, 22-5-1946; top secret, telegram, FAN 1135, SACMED to Chiefs of Staff, 7-5-1946; letter, Ross to WO, 21-5-1946.

manufacture so that the Allies retained complete control of its operational strength by increasing or restraining Italian operational ability through the regulation of the supply of aircraft and spare parts.<sup>75</sup>

As these deliberations were taking place in London, the Council of Ministers was locked in tense discussions aimed at finalising the draft Peace Treaty for Italy and the other ex-enemies. The peacemaking process during 1945-46 which was outwardly characterized by the efforts of the 'Big Three' to cooperate, in fact was punctuated by emerging tensions in East-West relations and the drift towards Cold War as the negotiation process exposed the interests of East and West to be mutually inimical.<sup>76</sup> The Peace Treaty with Italy generated a great deal of rancour as the West strove for a lenient treaty whilst the Soviets, having been effectively excluded from the allied administration of Italy, were far more interested in reparations, championing the cause of Yugoslavia and in keeping Italy weak.<sup>77</sup>

The treaty, which has been described as the 'swan-song' of the Wartime Alliance,<sup>78</sup> was born out of acrimony and frequent compromises. As the first leaks as to its contents occurred it appeared to the Italians that what was taking shape in Paris exceeded their worst nightmares. The Italian Peace Treaty limited the Italian armed forces to 300,000 men. It set total reparations

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<sup>75</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>. Byrnes, op. cit., Chapter 8, passim; Gaddis, op. cit., pp. 304-6 and 323-6; Yergin, op. cit., pp. 221-6; Feis, op. cit., pp. 121-8; Loth, op. cit., pp. 112-7; Nicolson, H., 'Peacemaking at Paris: Success, Failure or Farce?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. XXV, 1947, pp. 190-203; Gladwyn, op. cit., pp. 188-93; Dixon, P., *Double Diploma: The Life of Sir Pierson Dixon*, London, 1968, Chapter 12; Dawson-Ward, P., *The Threat of Peace: James F. Byrnes and the Council of Foreign Ministers, 1945-46*, Kent, 1979, pp. 99, 114-5 and 134.

<sup>77</sup>. Warner, 'Italy', pp. 31- 40; Miller, op. cit., pp. 68-76; Feis, op. cit., pp. 121-8.

<sup>78</sup>. Folly, op. cit., pp. 177.

to \$360 million. It required Italy to relinquish its Empire by confirming the independence of Albania and Ethiopia, returning the Dodecanese to Greece and renouncing all Italian claims to other colonies. Italy had also to cede a small part of its home territory to France and to accept the internationalisation of Trieste. Most of its fleet had to be surrendered to the victorious powers.<sup>79</sup> The Treaty was regarded as both punitive and unjust by Italy and Italian politicians began to clamour for its revision. They were concerned about the disarmament and the colonial clauses but the most vexatious was the reduction of the Italian Navy to a mere ghost of its previous self.<sup>80</sup> The realization that co-belligerency had not turned into a comprehensive redemption for Italy's Fascist folly generated much bad feeling in Italian government and military circles. The Italians who felt particularly aggrieved by the contents of the military clauses of the Treaty, initially directed their resentment against all the victors, but soon the resentment became particularly pronounced against the British.

Bevin's attempts to ensure a larger fleet for Italy as well as larger security forces, failed in the face of unyielding Soviet opposition. American determination to negotiate and sign any treaty, good or bad, on the basis that they would not pay more than lip-service to clauses they did not agree with until the treaty had been revised, did not assist him.<sup>81</sup> The inevitable Italian street

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<sup>79</sup>. Wheeler-Bennett and Nicholls, op. cit., pp. 672-8.

<sup>80</sup>. FO 371/60703/ZM1457/1286/22, 4-5-1946, telegram, no. 665, Charles to FO, 3-5-1946; ibid., ZM1478/1286/22, 6-5-1946, secret, telegram, no. 89, Paris to FO, 5-5-1946; FO 371/60704/ZM1557/1286/22, 10-5-1946, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Harvey, 7-5-1946; FO 371/60713/ZM2514/1286/22, 18-7-1946, confidential, despatch, no. 369, Charles to Bevin, 18-7-1946; FO 371/67814/Z5748, Annual Report for 1946, 12-6-1947; Piscitelli, E., *Da Parri a De Gasperi: Storia del dopoguerra, 1945-48*, Milano, 1975, pp. 175-88.

<sup>81</sup>. Miller, op. cit., 175-6; FO 371/60702/ZM1363/1286/22, 27-4-1946, secret, CFM(D)(46) 3rd meeting, 27-4-1946; FO 371/ZM2339/1286/22, 26-6-1946, letter, Bevin to De Gasperi, June 1946.

protests were accompanied by wild talk that the Italian navy would be prepared to scuttle ships rather than surrender them to Yugoslavia or Russia.<sup>82</sup> Since the Italian navy had remained under the supervision of the Royal Navy in accordance with the Cunningham-De Courten agreement of 23 September 1943, the Admiralty became worried that should the Italians decide to go ahead with their threats and succeed then Britain would be accused by the Soviets of collaborationism. The Italian Naval Ministry was strongly warned to resist any such temptations as it would prove to the detriment of Italy.<sup>83</sup> Italian naval circles had hoped that Britain would protect the Italian navy from savage cuts and from the indignity of ceding any of its ships to the Soviet Union. The Italians not only felt that Britain was the power that gained the most out of a reduced Italian navy but they also felt severely let down.<sup>84</sup> Bitterness over the disarmament and colonial clauses, fury that Britain had failed to protect the Italian navy and the lingering memories of the British heavy handedness during the period of co-belligerency all fused together to damage Anglo-Italian relations and to plunge British popularity in Italy to an all time low.<sup>85</sup> The situation led the Admiralty to conclude wisely, that the Italians would be unlikely to accept willingly a naval mission either before or after the signing of the Treaty.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>. FO 371/60704/ZM1557/1286/22, 10-5-1946, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Harvey, 7-5-1946; FO 371/60705/ZM2152/1286/22, 22-5-1946, top secret, letter, C-in-C to Admiralty, 18-5-1946.

<sup>83</sup>. FO 371/60705/ZM1643/1286/22, 16-5-1945, top secret, letter, Admiralty to C-in-C, Mediterranean, 14-5-1946; top secret, letter, C-in-C, to Admiralty, 18-5-1946; FO 371/60603/ZM1455/1286/22, 3-5-1946, minute by Hoyer-Millar, 29-4-1946; secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Charles, 1-5-1946.

<sup>84</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3162/89/22, 22-10-1946, secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Ward, 1-11-1946.

<sup>85</sup>. FO 371/60711/ZM2371/1286/22, 8-7-1946, telegram, no. 1051, Charles to FO, 6-7-1946; FO 371/60713/ZM2514/1286/22, 18-7-1946, confidential, despatch, no. 369, Charles to Bevin, 18-7-1946.

<sup>86</sup>. PREM 8/66, ORC(45)18 Revise, ORC(45)23, COS(45) 189th mtg, 29-8-1945.

In the meanwhile, inflammatory headlines appeared in the Italian Press such as 'Italy Unarmed to the Mercy of All',<sup>87</sup> 'British Indiscretions Regarding Our Armed Forces',<sup>88</sup> and 'Italy Has Almost Ceased to Exist as an Independent Nation'.<sup>89</sup> Bevin protested his innocence and revealed to De Gasperi the support he had given to Italy. Although the politicians were easy to mollify the Italian press and public were implacable. Britain tried to improve its image with and within Italy by using the BBC and its contacts with Italian socialist politicians such as Nenni and Saragat.<sup>90</sup> Nenni, in turn, confided to Attlee that he was determined to see the Peace Treaty signed and he asked for Britain's help. Britain decided that the least it could do was to return its share of the Italian fleet for scrapping to the Italians as a damage limitation exercise.<sup>91</sup>

In the meantime, a parallel crisis associated with the Venezia Giulia region had been unfolding which maintained Italian ill-feeling towards Britain. The tense stalemate over the Venezia Giulia situation had continued since neither Italy nor Yugoslavia were satisfied with the territorial clauses referring to Trieste and which had been declared a Free Port. The possibility of a Yugoslav military

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<sup>87</sup>. FO 371/60714/ZM2641/1286/22, 1-8-1946, telegram, no. 243, Charles to FO, translation of an article in *Minuto*, 31-7-1946.

<sup>88</sup>. *Avanti!*, 31-7-1946.

<sup>89</sup>. *Tempo*, 1-8-1946; FO 371/60714/ZM2641/1286/22, 1-8-1946, telegram, no. 243, Charles to FO, 1-8-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2691/1286/22, 7-8-1946, telegram, no. 35, Rome to UK Delegation, Paris, 3-8-1946.

<sup>90</sup>. FO 371/60713/ZM2521/1286/22, 19-7-1946, minutes by Ross, 19-7-1946 and 24-7-1946, Hoyer-Millar, 19-7-1946, W. Risdale, head of the News Department of the FO, and 26-7-1946, FO 371/60714/ZM2692/1286/22, 7-8-1946, minutes by Ross, 24-7-1946 and Sargent, 2-8-1946; FO 371/60715/ZM2742/1286/22, 10-8-1946, meeting between, McNeil and Nenni 1-2-1946 and Attlee and Nenni, 2-8-1946; Varsori, A., 'Bevin e Nenni, Ottobre 1946-Gennaio 1947: Una fase nei rapporti anglo-italiani del secondo dopoguerra', *Il politico*, Vol. XLIX, 1984, pp. 241-75.

<sup>91</sup>. FO 371/60714/ZM2692/1286/22, 7-8-1946, minutes by Ross, 24-7-1946.



action against Italy to solve the problem by force could not be discounted. De Gasperi told General Morgan that Italian troops should be allowed to take part in any Allied operations to defend Italy's North-Eastern border.<sup>92</sup> This request was looked upon favourably by the Allied Military Authorities in the light of the logistical problems they faced because of demobilization. The Joint Staff Mission (JSM) and the SACMED were aware that their forces would be overstretched in the event of a Yugoslav attack so they wanted to use Italian troops to supplement the guarding of lines of communications and thereby allow Allied troops to be used in active duty more efficiently and effectively. The JSM was particularly concerned that should they not be allowed to use Italian troops for support duties, then the Allied forces' own ability to maintain the *status quo* in Venezia Giulia would be compromised.<sup>93</sup>

General Morgan looked at the matter favourably because he was aware that Italian troop deployment would enable Britain to begin to reduce its own troop commitment in the region which had been delayed because of Italy's precarious internal security situation and the worsening in East-West relations. In early 1946, both Attlee and Dalton stressed the need for scaling down overseas commitments for both economic and domestic reasons. Bevin's unyielding opposition succeeded in convincing his colleagues that drastic

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<sup>92</sup>. FO 371/60563/ZM2643/35/22, 2-8-1946, top secret, JSM 296, JSM to Chiefs of Staff, 31-6-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2697/35/22, 7-8-1946, secret, letter Lowe, WO to Ross, 2-8-1946; minutes by Hoyer-Millar, 8-8-1946 and 9-8-1946; top secret, telegram, COS(W)358, Chiefs of Staff to JSM, 16-8-1946.

<sup>93</sup>. *Ibid.*, top secret, telegram, no. JSM 296, JSM, Washington to WO, 31-6-1946.

reductions should not occur before the conclusion of the peace treaties.<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless reductions of the British commitment in Italy were unavoidable. The British government had the biggest troop commitment in Italy and Venezia Giulia. It amounted to 239,000 men from the land forces and 30,000 men from the RAF. There were also 70,000 men who were provided by the Dominions and India. The next largest contingent was the American one which was rather small in comparison fluctuating between 70,000 and 80,000 men. The British government had hoped that by April 1946 it would be able to reduce its troop commitment to 120,000 men approximately and remove all Dominion and Indian troops. By June 1946 preferably or by the end of 1946, at the very latest, it hoped to remove all British troops from Italy excluding those in Venezia Giulia and those manning the lines of communication to Austria who it was hoped, could be withdrawn as soon as the Peace Treaty came into force.<sup>95</sup> Complete withdrawal from Italy was delayed because of fears about PCI intentions during the elections and referendum of June 1946. The Straits Controversy, the resumption of the Greek Civil War and the increasing tension between Italy and Yugoslavia because of Yugoslavia's dissatisfaction with and refusal to sign the Italian Peace Treaty, had identified the Central and Eastern Mediterranean as an easily combustible region. Any British hopes for a quick disengagement from Venezia Giulia were dashed by these developments and by Byrnes' declaration, to the effect, that for so long as Yugoslavia did not sign the Peace

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<sup>94</sup>. CAB 79/32, COS(45)264th meeting, 1-11-1946; *ibid.*, COS(45)265th meeting, 2-11-1946; CAB 80/99, COS(46)5(O), 8-1-1946; *ibid.*, COS(46)9(O) Revise, 15-1-1946; CAB 131/1, top secret, DO(46)5, 15-2-1946; *ibid.*, top secret, DO(46) 8, 18-3-1946; FO 371/60564/ZM3164/35/22, 12-9-1946, minutes by Hankey, 20-4-1946; Smith, R., and Zametica, J., 'The Cold Warrior: Clement Attlee Reconsidered, 1945-47', *International Affairs*, Vol., 61, 1985, pp. 237-52; Warner, 21-9-1946; Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-50; Peden, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50.

<sup>95</sup>. FO 371/60562/ZM85/35/22, 5-1-1946, secret, Annex, JP(45)311 Final, 13-12-1945; *ibid.*, ZM338/35/22, 28-1-1946, minutes by Hoyer-Millar, 30-1-1946, 13-2-1946 and 19-2-1946, Harvey, 7-2-1946 and 14-2-1946, Ross, 21-1-1946 and 16-2-1946 and Sir Orme Sargent, Permanent Under-Secretary, FO, 15-2-1946.

Treaty with Italy all Allied troops would remain *in situ*.<sup>96</sup>

Although the Foreign Office was aware of the benefits of Italian troop deployment in Venezia Giulia it regarded such action as being fraught with problems because Yugoslavia was technically still at war with Italy. The deployment of Italian troops alongside the Allies along Italy's North-Eastern border could allow the Soviets to claim that the Allies were acting illegally and provoke the Yugoslavs into armed action which in turn, because of East West tensions, could flare up into a major international incident with far-reaching implications for local and international security.<sup>97</sup> In view of this possible outcome, the initial reaction of Bevin and the Western Department was to reject an Italian deployment in Venezia Giulia but, in order not to estrange Italy and to avoid giving rise to further anti-British sentiments within Italian government circles the decision was not communicated to the Italian Prime Minister.<sup>98</sup> Throughout this period British foreign policy had aimed at not antagonizing the Soviets unduly and towards localizing any incident to avoid any direct confrontation with the USSR.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, the Foreign Office did not want to incite Yugoslavia to careless action at a time when negotiations for the Peace Treaty were still in progress and Edvard Kardelj, the Yugoslav Foreign Minister had left no-one in any doubt after his speech in Paris that his

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<sup>96</sup>. CAB 79/32, COS(45)264th meeting, 1-11-1946; *ibid.*, COS(45)265th meeting, 2-11-1946; CAB 80/99, COS(46)5(O), 8-1-1946, COS(46)9(O) Revise, 15-1-1946; FRUS, 1947, Vol. III, p. 892; Lewis, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-50; Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-74 and 196-8.

<sup>97</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2350/89/22, 6-7-1946, secret, telegram, no. 377, Rome to FO, 14-7-1946; secret, telegram, no. 438, FO to Rome, 26-7-1946.

<sup>98</sup>. FO 371/60564/ZM3614/35/22, 12-9-1946, minute by Bevin, undated; FO 371/60563/ZM2643/35/22, 2-8-1946, minutes by Hoyer-Millar, 8-8-1946 and 8-9-1946; *ibid.*, top secret, telegram, no. COS(W)358, COS to JSM, 16-8-1946.

<sup>99</sup>. *Ibid.*, top secret, telegram, no. JSM 296, JSM to Chiefs of Staff, 31-7-1946.

government was greatly distressed with the Treaty provisions for Trieste.<sup>100</sup> The Foreign Office's view was supported by evidence gathered by British Intelligence sources which reported a reluctance on Yugoslavia's part to act since only 30% of its fighter planes were serviceable.<sup>101</sup> It was precisely for these reasons that the Foreign Office felt that a public sanctioning of the use of Italian troops in the case of a conflict with Yugoslavia would create more trouble than benefits since such action could be interpreted as a provocation.<sup>102</sup>

This initial decision of the Foreign Office and its rationale did not convince General Morgan and Admiral Stone<sup>103</sup> and this led to discord between the Foreign Office and the British military and eventually, Britain and America.<sup>104</sup> The British military reminded the Foreign Office that it would be very difficult for reinforcements to be brought in from elsewhere. In order to strengthen their argument they pointed out, in a veiled threat calculated at deflecting the objections of the Foreign Office, that reinforcements if needed could only be found in Palestine and that a weakening of the British military presence there

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<sup>100</sup>. Ibid., minutes by Hoyer-Millar, 8-8-1946 and 9-8-1946.

<sup>101</sup>. FO 371/60564/ZM3659/35/22, 29-10-1946, top secret, letter, Major General Sir Leslie C. Hollis, Chief of Staff Officer to the Minister of Defence to Sargent, 24-10-1946; note, Sargent to Attlee, 29-10-1946; top secret, Annex III, telegram, NAF 1224, SACMED to CCS, 25-10-1946.

<sup>102</sup>. FO 371/60564/ZM3164/35/22, 12-9-1946, minutes by Hankey, 20-4-1946, and Warner, 21-9-1946; *ibid.*, FO 371/60603/ZM2351/89/22, minute by Warner, 21-3-1946; FO 371/60563/ZM2643/35/22, 2-8-1946, minutes by Hoyer-Millar, 7-8-1946, 8-8-1946 and 9-8-1946.

<sup>103</sup>. FO 371/60563/ZM2697/35/22, 7-8-1946, secret, letter, WO to Western Department, 2-8-1946.

<sup>104</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2352/89/22, 2-7-1946, telegram, no. 2046, Washington to FO, 30-3-1946; FO 371/60563/ZM2697/35/22, 7-8-1948, top secret, telegram, COS(W)358, COS to JSM, 16-8-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2710/35/22, 8-8-1946, top secret, telegram, COS(W)353, COS to JSM, 2-8-1948.

would expose Palestine to the risk of trouble.<sup>105</sup> General Morgan, a fervent supporter of the involvement of Italian troops in the defence of their own country, maintained that this would boost their morale, improve their operational capability and facilitate the task of the Allies in re-organizing and rehabilitating the Italian armed forces. He also stressed that this was a good public relations exercise for Britain.<sup>106</sup> General Sir Hastings Ismay, the Military Secretary to the Cabinet, shared this view and when the British military realized that their American colleagues fully supported their views, they became intransigent. The United States Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided that General Morgan 'should be allowed full use of all troops in Italy in case of Yugoslav aggression'<sup>107</sup> and the American delegation to the Paris Peace Conference lost no opportunity to make its feelings on the matter clear to Bevin.<sup>108</sup>

This pressure made Bevin and the Foreign Office overcome their initial opposition to the use of Italian troops in Venezia Giulia, but they did not capitulate completely. The Foreign Office was unwilling for Britain to be seen by the world as openly colluding with an 'ex-enemy' against a recent ally with whom Bevin still hoped to put relations on an 'even keel' despite American opposition.<sup>109</sup> At the same time however, the Foreign Office had always

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<sup>105</sup>. FO 371/60563/ZM2697/35/22, 7-8-1946, secret, letter, WO to Western Department, 2-8-1946, *ibid.*, ZM3569/35/22, PM 46/144, letter from the Foreign Office to the Prime Minister, 29-10-1946.

<sup>106</sup>. FO 371/60563/ZM2639/35/22, 3-8-1946, top secret, COS 899/6, memorandum by General Sir Hastings Ismay, Military Secretary for the Cabinet to Attlee, 26-7-1946; confidential, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Charles, 8-8-1946.

<sup>107</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol., VI, pp. 877-8, 887-9, 856-60 and 899-900.

<sup>108</sup>. FO 371/60563/ZM2643/35/22, 2-8-1946, top secret, JSM 296, JSM to Chiefs of Staff, 31-6-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2710/35/22, 27-7-1946, secret, letter, COS(W)353, COS to JSM, 2-8-1946; top secret, telegram, FAN 671, CCS to AFHQ, 11-6-1946.

<sup>109</sup>. Lane, 'Coming to Terms with Tito', pp. 14-7.

accepted that if the use of Italian troops was the only alternative to a military defeat at the hands of the Yugoslavs, then it would be prepared to contemplate ad-hoc arrangements. Thus, Bevin and the Foreign Office sought to distinguish between minor and major episodes occurring in Venezia Giulia and proposed that the matter of the deployment of Italian troops be decided according to the seriousness of the situation. The Foreign Office continued to hold out on its insistence that even if SACMED were to use Italian troops in the defence of the region, such a decision should not be communicated to the Italian government. It maintained this line to the end, despite persistent requests from the British Chiefs of Staff and SACMED to disclose the decision to the Italians as a means of improving Anglo-Italian relations. Instead, the Foreign Office suggested that the Italian Prime Minister ought to be told simply that the issue was still under consideration. For the moment at least, the Foreign Office view prevailed.<sup>110</sup>

British handling of this issue showed clearly that Britain, unlike America, was not willing to go out of its way to antagonize the Yugoslavs and that it was determined to respect the Treaty it had just negotiated in Paris. Britain hoped that if no rush decisions were taken and if Italian and Yugoslav tempers cooled, then, Italy and Yugoslavia would eventually sign the Treaty and a potentially dangerous incident in the area could be averted. The British attitude towards upholding the Peace Treaty and the issue of the use of Italian troops prior to the ratification of the Treaty by the Italian Parliament showed clearly the framework within which British policy towards Italy was set. The policy was bound by the parameters of regard for international law and adherence to treaty provisions but at the same time strengthening and rehabilitating the

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<sup>110</sup>. FO 371/60564/ZM3614/35/22, 12-9-1946, top secret, memorandum by Ross, 'The Use of Italian and Police Forces in the event of Yugoslav aggression in N.E. Italy', 25-9-1946; undated minute by Bevin; "I disagree"; minute by Sargent, 1-10-1946; CAB 79/52, COS(46)148th mtg, 4-10-1946; CAB 80/102, COS(46)236(O), 3-10-1946.

Italian armed and security forces within these limits. America and Britain found themselves in disagreement over their approach to Italian matters and Britain found itself unprepared for the American's willingness to allow Italy open leeway with the provisions of the Peace Treaty and which in the end resulted in the undermining of relations between Britain and Italy.<sup>111</sup> The Foreign Office hoped that any difficulties its policy towards the Peace Treaty policy had created in Anglo-Italian relations would be temporary ones and that as soon as the Italians had time to cool down they would see that Britain had tried to shield their country from some of the most extravagant claims of Yugoslavia and the USSR and that in time, the Italian government would be persuaded to invite the proposed missions.<sup>112</sup>

Such optimism, however, was rather misplaced in view of the obstacles Britain had to overcome since the mission proposals had some unattractive aspects from the Italian point of view.<sup>113</sup> Britain had to convince the Italian government not only to accept the missions but also to persuade it to finance them. The Treasury had decided that the resources for the reconstruction of Italian armed and police forces had to be found from the Italians and it was unwilling to endorse the Foreign Office's proposal to fund the missions until the Italian

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<sup>111</sup>. FO 371/79349/Z7984/10535/22, 8-12-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 739, Mallet to Attlee, 1-12-1949; DEFE 5/16, top secret, COS(49)327, 'Policy towards the Italian Armed Forces, 4-10-1949.

<sup>112</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, memorandum by Ross, 8-11-1946; FO 371/67793/Z8558/135/22, 29-9-1947, minutes by Brown, 3-10-1947 and Harvey, 6-10-1947.

<sup>113</sup>. AIR 23/6343, letter, R. B. Pakenham, Mediterranean Allied Air Committee, to AFHQ, 2-4-1946; DEFE 5/3, top secret, COS(47)17(O), note by the Air Ministry: 'Re-equipment of the Italian Air Force', 20-1-1947; draft signal, MoD to JSM, undated; FO 371/67792/ZM4216/135/22, 1-5-1947, no. 974, Charles to FO, 29-4-1946.

government would be willing to assume their upkeep.<sup>114</sup> It was also not prepared to allow Britain to enter into barter agreements with Italy, a decision which created liquidity problems for the Italian government and made them less than willing to enter into any purchase agreements at this stage.<sup>115</sup> The Italians faced even more severe financial limitations than the British due to their war-devastated economy. Moreover, in view of the ever spiralling costs of maintaining their armed and police forces they were extremely reluctant to incur further financial commitments especially since such expenditure would be unpopular with its impoverished population and with the Communist and Socialist components of the government.<sup>116</sup>

In addition to such problems there were other practicalities to consider with regards to the stationing of missions in the post-treaty period and which made the pursuit such a policy a potential minefield. The PCI had been an integral part of all postwar Italian governments since 1944 and this complicated the situation since it was believed the PCI could oppose and frustrate any Allied plans designed to push the Italian internal security forces towards an anti-

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<sup>114</sup>. FO 371/60602/ZM89/89/22, 5-1-1946, minute by Ross, 10-1-1946; FO 371/60622/ZM673/187/22, 26-2-1946, letter, Treasury to FO, 26-2-1946; *ibid.*, ZM928/187/22, 19-3-1946, letter, Treasury to Ross, 5-4-1946; *ibid.*, ZM509/187/2, 12-2-1947, letter, FO to Treasury, 15-2-1946; M. Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 324

<sup>115</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2983/89/22, 29-8-1946, despatch, no. 429. Charles to Attlee, 19-8-1946; Air Vice Marshall I.E. Brodie, Director of the Air Forces Sub-Commission to British Embassy, Rome, 26-7-1946; British Embassy, Rome, to Brodie, 19-8-1946; FO 371/60622/ZM509/187/22, 12-2-1946, letter, S.H. Wright, Treasury, to Ross, 11-2-1946; letter, Ross to Wright, 15-2-1946; *ibid.*, ZM928/187/22, 19-3-1946, memorandum by Ross 27-3-1946.

<sup>116</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, letter, Brigadier General Sudgen to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946; FO 371/73174/Z3972/274/22, 11-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 153, Mallet to Bevin, 4-5-1948.



communist stance.<sup>117</sup> The missions would only be worthwhile from the British point of view if they could remain in Italy after the Peace Treaty was signed. If this could not be achieved then the whole missions idea was not worth pursuing. The Treaty however, had specified that all military forces would have to vacate Italy within ninety days of its ratification.<sup>118</sup> The Air Ministry also spotted an obvious contradiction in the whole missions concept. It observed that:

it would be somewhat inappropriate to have on the one hand a mission whose primary aim would be a general amelioration of the Italian Armed forces while at the same time providing other officers on the staff of the Ambassador to see that the Peace Treaty terms were carried out.<sup>119</sup>

As a result of these concerns, Whitehall saw no point in attaching missions without the explicit consent and open invitation of the Italian government. The Foreign Office embarked on the task of cultivating the Italians and assessing what type of mission would be most agreeable from both the Italian point of view and best for British interests. This decision brought to the fore the question of the most effective composition of the missions. Should they comprise only British personnel or should they be Anglo-American in composition. A major worry surrounding the latter option was that it could inadvertently present the Soviet Union and the PCI with valuable propaganda by re-igniting Russian accusations that Britain and the United States were 'ganging up' against the USSR. Jack Ward, the counsellor at the British Embassy in Rome warned that Britain ought not to accept combined Anglo-

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<sup>117</sup>. FO 371/60562/ZM975/35/22, 22-3-1946, top secret, FX 62994, CHQ.CMF to WO, undated; FO 371/67814/Z5748/22, Annual Report for 1946, 12-6-1947; Ellwood, op. cit., pp. 127-30; Miller, op. cit., pp. 191-3.

<sup>118</sup>. Wheeler-Bennett and Nichols, op. cit., pp. 672-8.

<sup>119</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2983/89/22, 29-8-1946, despatch, no. 429, Charles to Attlee, 19-8-1946; report, Brodie to the British Embassy in Rome, 26-7-1946.

American missions as the Communists could capitalize on them and, in any case, he did not think that the Americans would be willing to get involved.<sup>120</sup> However, some sections of the Foreign Office were not deterred by such concerns and were ready to adopt a more adversarial policy towards the Soviet Union than Bevin himself. Thus, Christopher F. A. Warner, the Superintending Under-Secretary of the Information Department of the Foreign Office maintained that the Soviets would still think that :

Britain and that US [were] conniving against them - indeed, in many ways we are, in the sense that they are carrying out a general offensive against both His Majesty's Government and the US government and the latter two governments believe in close co-operation. Italy is one of the countries over which the Communists and the Russians want to establish their influence and which we want to link with the West.<sup>121</sup>

Ward's views however, gained the ascendancy as the reluctance of America to get involved in any post-Treaty military missions became as apparent as the urgency with which the Foreign Office regarded the internal security situation in Italy. Thus, the Foreign came to view as preferable purely British missions in order to achieve the crucial objective of Britain consolidating its position in Italian military affairs. The Service Departments also came out in favour of British-only missions when they were asked by the Foreign Office to give their opinion on the feasibility, desirability and the composition of these missions.<sup>122</sup>

London's views however, were not fully compatible with those shared by some British officers in Italy, who felt that if anything went wrong then criticism and

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<sup>120</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3612/89/22, 22-10-46, minute by Ross, 23-10-1946; letter, Ward to Hoyer-Millar, 23-10-1946; letter, Hoyer-Millar to Ward, 1-11-1946.

<sup>121</sup>. Ibid., ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, minute by Warner, 15-11-1946.

<sup>122</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, letter, Brigadier General C.S. Sudgen to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946; *ibid.*, ZM 2624/89/22, 30-7-1946, secret, letter, FO to WO, 8-8-1946; E. Iredell to Hoyer-Millar, 5-9-1946; FO 371/60604/ZM3162/89/22, 22-10-1946, secret, letter, Rome to Foreign Office, 18-10-1946.

blame would be directed towards Britain. These officers also had concerns that all-British missions would alienate those American officials in Italy and, in particular Ambassador Alexander Kirk, all of whom had tried to convince the US government of the merits of joint Allied missions. It is quite clear that British and American officials based in Italy had forged a close relationship during the war and despite Admiral Stone's anti-British outbursts, they were anxious to continue allied cooperation in this field. The concerns by officers at a local level, however, were buried by the continued unwillingness of the United States to get involved in Allied missions. Eventually, Admiral Warren, General Goulburn and Air Vice-Marshall Brodie, the heads of the Service sub-commissions of the Allied Commission agreed that British-only advisory and technical missions for the Italian services after the Peace Treaty had come into force were the best option 'both from the point of view of British policy and also in the interests of the efficiency of the Italian forces.'<sup>123</sup>

It was the rapid deterioration of the internal security situation in Italy in the second half of 1946 that alarmed both the Italian government and the Allies and which presented Britain with an opportunity to push forward its plans. As summer gave way to autumn, dissatisfaction with the Peace Treaty coupled with renewed food shortages, economic stagnation, rapid rises in inflation and unemployment and a large and hungry floating refugee population resulted in further social unrest.<sup>124</sup> To contain the disorders the *Carabinieri* resumed their time-honoured heavy-handed ways of repressing protest by opening fire on demonstrators thereby precipitating further disorder. De Gasperi felt that if the

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<sup>123</sup>. FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, letter, Brigadier General C.S. Sudgen to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2624/89/22, 30-7-1946, secret, letter, FO to WO, 8-8-1946; letter, Iredell to Hoyer-Millar, 5-9-1946; FO 371/60604/ZM3162/89/22, 22-10-1946, secret, letter, Rome to Foreign Office, 18-10-1946; FO 371/67793/Z4286/135/22, 18-12-1947, letter, Washington to FO, 12-12-1947.

<sup>124</sup>. Ginsborg, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-10.

police been properly equipped and trained in modern methods such levels of violence could have been avoided. Under these circumstances, De Gasperi approached Morgan to ask for assistance in improving the training and efficiency of the Italian security forces and he also told David McKey, the *chargé d'affaires* of the American Embassy in Rome, that he would welcome the attaching of an Allied mission to the police but he restated that he could not exclude the Russians and if the latter were to be included he would never agree to such a mission, especially, one that was acceptable to the PCI.<sup>125</sup>

Thus, the British found the moment propitious for renewing their attempts. The Western Department suggested that the best way to promote the missions was to exploit De Gasperi's concerns on the efficiency of the Italian internal security forces and emphasise the benefits these from a Police mission that would not only concentrate on the *Carabinieri* but also on the *Sicurezza Pubblica* - the Italian civil police force which was in a state of disarray and which had been identified by Noel Charles as ideologically suspect. The fear was that if the relatively isolated civil police continued to be left to its own devices, its state of demoralization could expose it to Communist infiltration and in time the Communists could convert it into a militia along Balkan lines.<sup>126</sup> Similar concerns had been voiced vociferously by the Americans since 1945.<sup>127</sup>

The Foreign Office raised the issue with the Italians in October 1946. Hoyer-Millar asked Ward, who had left the Reconstruction Department for Rome, to make it absolutely clear to the Italians that the missions would have a purely

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<sup>125</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, p. 940; Miller, op. cit., pp. 191-3.

<sup>126</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM3560/187/22, 15-10-1946, secret, letter, Charles to Harvey, 8-10-1946; confidential, letter, Ward to Hoyer-Millar, 18-10-1946; secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Ward, 2-11-1946, minutes by Ross, 21-10-1946 and 23-10-1946, Hoyer-Millar, 24-10-1946, Harvey, 25-10-1946 .

<sup>127</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, p. 930 and 940; Miller, op. cit., p. 191.

advisory role, that Britain had no intention of dictating policy and that they would be small with no executive powers.<sup>128</sup> The Foreign Office had concluded that such small missions would be more palatable to the Italians, especially if it was made explicit that they would not retain all the functions that they had enjoyed under the Armistice regime and which had excited much public hostility in Italian military circles when they had become public knowledge.<sup>129</sup> The missions would be attached directly to the Italian armed services or, would come under the corresponding service *attaché* at the British Embassy in Rome. Their aim would be to improve the fight-worthiness of the Italian army and they would also furnish Britain with the necessary intelligence concerning the morale, state and effectiveness of the Italian army all of which had been assessed to be at low ebb.<sup>130</sup>

From 15 October and throughout November 1946, whilst still seeking to convince the Italians to accept the missions the British offered them yet another alternative, namely, for Italian police officers to be trained in the UK. This did not mean that the British had decided to abandon, albeit reluctantly, their plans for a police mission. They continued pressing for such a mission even after the signing of the Peace Treaty in February 1947 and right up until the end of 1947, despite the fact that the Italian Desk of the Foreign Office began voicing its doubts on the likelihood of the Italian government

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<sup>128</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3162/89/22, 22-10-1946, secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to J. G. Ward, 1-11-1946.

<sup>129</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, memorandum by Ross, 8-11-1946; FO 371/60603/ZM2883/89/22, 22-8-1946, secret, letter, Sudgen, WO to Hoyer-Millar, 20-8-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2624/89/22, 30-7-1946, secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Sudgen, 30-7-1946; FO 371/60622/ZM187/187/22, 12-1-1946, secret, letter, WO to FO, 20-8-1946.

<sup>130</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM3774/89/22, 11-11-1946, memorandum by Ross, 8-11-1946; secret, telegram, no 1354, FO to Washington, 22-11-1946; FO 371/67793/Z8817/135/22, 8-10-1947, letter, WO to FO, 7-10-1947.

accepting it.<sup>131</sup>

The British felt justified in their approach of promoting their overall mission plans on the back of a mission dedicated to the training of the *Carabinieri* and the other law enforcement agencies on two grounds. First, because the British government had concluded that the main threat to Italy's future orientation in international affairs and consequent disposition towards Britain came not from the Red Army but from the PCI;<sup>132</sup> and second, because of De Gasperi's worries that his police forces were not able to deal effectively with internal disorders. The British were determined that the police mission, in particular, would have to be an entirely British affair rather than an Allied one because of US diffidence, the urgent attention Italy's internal security situation required and concerns that the calibre of American police officers would not be of as high quality as their British counterparts.<sup>133</sup>

The political realities facing De Gasperi in 1946 were not different from those which faced Parri in 1945. Italy was still governed by a heterogeneous coalition of parties which included the Communists and the only foreign policy that could be agreed upon was one of neutrality. The acceptance of military missions that excluded advisors from the Soviet Union would fly against the grain of such a

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<sup>131</sup>. FO 371/67793/Z8558/135/22, 29-9-1947, minutes by Brown, 3-10-1947 and Harvey, 6-10-1947.

<sup>132</sup>. FO 371/60560/ZM28/28/22, 2-1-1946 to *ibid.*, ZM726/28/22, 4-3-1946, 'Weekly Intelligence Reports', *passim*; FO 371/60572/ZM40/40/22, 3-1-1946 to ZM4324/40/22, 21-12-1946 'Fortnightly and Monthly Economic Reports', *passim*.

<sup>133</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM315/187/22, 24-2-1946, telegram, no. 1350, FO to Washington, 11-2-1946; record of a meeting among Home Office, Foreign Office and War Office officials, on the proposed police mission to Italy, 5-2-1946; *ibid.*, ZM619/187/22, 21-2-1946, aide memoir for Bevin: 'Police Mission', 20-2-1946; FO 371/60622/ZM592/187/22, 1-3-1946, ORC, 30-8-1945; *ibid.*, ZM212/187/22, 14-1-1946, letter, Ross to Beighton, Treasury, 21-1-1946; *ibid.*, ZM1729/187/22, 23-5-1946, minutes by Sargent and Ross, 15-6-1946.

policy.<sup>134</sup> De Gasperi was an astute politician who had no desire to cause the downfall of his government before the Peace Treaty was signed and ratified by the Italian Parliament. Furthermore, the Italian government was playing for time to see if the Americans came up with more advantageous proposals. Thus, whilst showing a keen interest in accepting the cost-free elements of the British proposals they proved to be extremely reticent in committing themselves to any expenditure. Their attitude provoked the irritation of the Rome Embassy which came to interpret the Italian behaviour to be the result of 'gambling somewhat unscrupulously on the Allies' direct interest in the efficiency of their armed forces to squeeze as much free equipment as they [could]'.<sup>135</sup>

Despite British efforts, the Italian government remained equivocal and non-committal throughout 1946. On the one hand, it would keep stressing how much it would like British military assistance in the form of missions and on the other, it kept on distancing itself from any commitment or even tentative affirmative reply because of the political atmosphere in Italy. At the same time, however, the Italians would keep the question alive through unofficial channels. For example, General Efsio Marras - previously Commander of Milan and prospective head of the Italian General Staff - approached General Goulburn, the head of the Land Forces Sub-Commission of the Allied Commission and let it be known that although he had no authority to speak officially, his wish was to come to some formal arrangement with the British concerning the training and equipping of the Italian army in the post-Treaty period. Baits of this kind, coupled with Count Carandini's positive attitude encouraged the Foreign Office and the Service Departments to devise new plans and new approaches

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<sup>134</sup>. FO 371/60562/ZM975/35/22, 22-3-1946, top secret, FX 62994, CHQ.CMF to WO, undated; Ellwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-30; Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-3; FO 371/67814/Z5748, Annual Report for 1946, 12-6-1947.

<sup>135</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM4235/89/22, 16-11-1946, secret, letter, Ward to Ross, 7-12-1946.

to make the mission plans acceptable to the Italians.<sup>136</sup>

By December 1946, however, the Rome Embassy was becoming extremely frustrated with its lack of success in making the Italians clarify their position. As the end of 1946 approached and the last British troops from Italy were being readied for withdrawal, with the exception of those based in the Udine area, the War Office became so concerned that it proposed a fresh and ingenious approach to the Foreign Office and one which included a not so veiled element of blackmail. The War Office proposed that the Rome Embassy ought to approach the Italians and tell them that if they did not invite British military missions to assist the Italian Army in the post-treaty period then their forces would be forced to make do with no assistance whatsoever. However, the Foreign Office decided that such approach would alienate the Italians still further and did not proceed along the War Office lines.<sup>137</sup> Thus, a position of impasse and stagnation had been reached.

By January 1947 and with the prospect of the signing of the Italian Treaty imminent the British realised that their scope for waiting had diminished uncomfortably and they would have to put their proposal to the Italians directly rather than to wait for them to ask. The British government put its proposals to the Italian government backed up by the British Air Ministry's plan for the equipping of the Italian air force. The plan envisaged that of the seven squadrons under Fighter Headquarters, five would be furnished with British IX Spitfires and two with American P-51 aircraft.<sup>138</sup> Britain however, could not afford to supply all this equipment in the form of aid and it expected to be paid

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<sup>136</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>. FO 371/60604/ZM4234/89/22, 16-12-1946, letter, WO to FO, 11-12-1946; minute by Ross, 12-12-1946.

<sup>138</sup>. FO 371/67791/Z1967/135/22, 24-2-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1702, FO to Washington, 21-2-1947; FRUS, 1947, Vol. III, p. 887.



in hard currency. The Air Ministry devised a mixed scheme to overcome these financial problems which envisaged a programme of assistance for the Italian Air Force which included both free and chargeable elements. The assistance package included the free supply of British equipment - all the Spitfires and some spare parts - valued at £2,149,000. Some of the aircraft were already in Italy and were supplied from British surplus stores in the Mediterranean. The package also included the supply, for payment of £305,000 in sterling in London, for equipment valued at £1,401,000 which would be supplied from surplus stores outside Italy. On top of this Britain would provide Italy with equipment and spare parts from new production at full prices and which was estimated at £1,157,000 in sterling.<sup>139</sup>

1947 brought with it new possibilities and challenges. American proposals for the re-equipment of the Italian Air force emerged which were more attractive than the British ones as they undercut them. The overall costs to the Italians included a 'nominal price for aircraft spares for three years and associated aircraft maintenance equipment plus the actual costs incurred in placing the aircraft into operational standard'. Furthermore the Americans decided that the Italians would be 'allowed to return P-38 aircraft for scrapping or other disposal and use the credit for P-51s. Moreover, they stressed that in view of the crucial importance of the speedy improvement of the Italian armed forces, they would make an effort to close the gap between 'scrap price' and 'nominal cost' as much as possible in order to overcome Italian financial and budgetary limitations. The Americans also stressed that had they not been prohibited by regulations they would have been willing to supply the equipment without

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<sup>139</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/67791/Z1967/135/22, 24-2-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1702, FO to Washington, 21-2-1947; FO 371/67792/ZM4503/135/22, 12-5-1947, telegram, no. 1058, Charles to FO, 10-5-1947.

payment.<sup>140</sup> Such a scheme was very difficult for Britain to better not only because of its well-nigh impossible economic situation in 1947, but also because throughout this period Britain's view was that in terms of procurement, Italy 'should be given lower priority to the Dominions and the allied countries'.<sup>141</sup>

London was extremely distressed by the American foray into an area which it had been agreed was its own responsibility and without even any prior consultation. It judged the American proposals as unrealistic as the equipment the Italians were likely to receive was obsolete and out of date American stock. In the end the United States had to withdraw its offer and to accept the implementation of the British proposals. The British plan was put into action during spring and summer 1947. Its implementation was not a straightforward affair because the Italians were willing to absorb the cost-free elements of the British package but rather reluctant to incur the costs of those aspects which required payment. As a result of this, the improvement in the efficiency of the Italian air force was not significant. British military aid and equipment to Italy continued also from surplus stores in Austria which also included Sherman tanks.<sup>142</sup>

Anglo-American difficulties over the equipping of the Italian air force revealed some of the problems the British would have to face increasingly in its relations with Italy, namely that America in its eagerness to strengthen Italy would be

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<sup>140</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. III, pp. 867-79.

<sup>141</sup>. FO 371/67791/Z1967/135/22, 24-2-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1702, FO to Washington, 21-2-1947; CAB 134/215, EPC(47)7, secret, note by Bevin, 29-10-1947.

<sup>142</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. III, pp. 884 and 887-8; FO 371/67793/Z6911/135/22, 26-7-1947, secret, telegram, no. COS(W)488, MoD to JSM, 10-7-1947; *ibid.*, Z7217/135/22, 7-8-1947, letter, Ward to Crosthwaite, 7-8-1947; *ibid.*, Z8639/135/22, 1-10-1947, *Aide Memoir*, FO to MAE, 26-9-1947; *ibid.*, Z8855/135/22, 9-10-1947, restricted, HQ. BTA to WO, 4-10-1947.

prepared to by-pass Britain. This attitude contributed greatly to the delay and subsequent failure of the missions plan to be implemented.<sup>143</sup> This had been the case from July 1945 when the British had first put forward their proposals to the Italian government. The Americans had viewed the British plans with a distinct lack of enthusiasm and they deferred their own decision on their implementation for the future. When the US had been approached by the British yet again in August 1946, the Americans expressed their unwillingness to get involved but they encouraged the British authorities to explore their chances with the Italians once again. This equivocal approach was due to the fact that throughout the first half of 1946 the State Department and the American military were at odds with each other on how far they should intervene in the reconstruction of the Italian armed forces. The State Department advocated interventionism. The American military felt that such intervention would have an adverse effect on the Italian armed forces since their equipment had been standardised along British lines. Since Britain had assumed the leading role in connection with Italian military affairs they felt reluctant to interfere. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff understanding was that their 'military commitment in Italy should be reduced as rapidly as possible'.<sup>144</sup> All their actions up until August 1946 had been based on the premise that 'the American role in the Mediterranean theatre has always been a supporting one to the British and that it was undesirable to disturb the present relationship'.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM3174/187/22, 22-11-1946, secret, telegram, no. 1355, FO to Washington, 22-11-1946; FO 371/67793/135/22, 29-9-1947, telegram, no. 1868, Ward to FO, 26-9-1947.

<sup>144</sup>. FRUS, 1945, Vol. IV, p. 1050-9; FO 371/67791/Z599/135/22, 17-1-1947, minute by Ross, 20-1-1947; *ibid.*, Z1967/135/22, 24-2-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1702, FO to Washington, 22-2-1947; *ibid.*, Z2238/135/22, 3-3-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1308, Washington to FO, 1-3-1947; FO 371/67793/Z8558/135/22, 29-9-1947, telegram, no. 1868, ward to FO, 26-9-1947.

<sup>145</sup>. FO 371/60563/ZM2639/22/22, 3-8-1946, top secret, FO minute to Attlee, 1-8-1946; confidential, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Charles, 8-8-1946; FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, p. 950.

In fact, it had been this very ambiguity in American policy towards Italian military affairs that had enabled Britain to maintain its influence in Italy for as long as it did.

As 1946 had progressed and relations between East and West worsened, the State Department became even determined to reduce British influence in Italy. The position of the State Department on further engagement in Italian military and police matters *vis-à-vis* the US Joint Chiefs of Staff stance on disengagement was strengthened by the attitudes of the American military authorities in Italy. Admiral Ellery Stone, the Chief Commissioner of the Allied Commission, was a fierce critic of British policy towards Italy and pressed his government forcefully at every given opportunity to seek an invitation from the Italian government for the installation of purely American missions in the post-Treaty Italian army. He claimed that such missions would be more successful because the Italian military was better disposed to accept them and because it was in America's 'long-term interests in Italy and the Mediterranean to undertake this responsibility *vis-à-vis* the postwar Italian army'. He went on to add that Anglo-American missions were a poor second alternative and that they should be acceptable only on an absolute parity basis in personnel and policy making matters. He pulled no punches when he gave his opinion on British-only missions which he described as the 'last and least desirable' alternative.<sup>146</sup> Although Stone's opinions did not find much favour with the Pentagon which regarded his views as extreme, they caused a resonance with the American Embassy in Rome and the more interventionist State Department because of the deterioration of Italian internal security and the polarization of the international scene. This situation succeeded in helping the State

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<sup>146</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, pp. 917 and 947.

Department to make the Pentagon rethink its policy.<sup>147</sup>

Whilst these new realities were being digested at the Foreign Office, Count Carlo Sforza, the new Italian Foreign Minister, announced emphatically that the Italian government and the Italian Ministry of War had decided to reject the proposed British missions because of fears of possible communist reaction. At the same time he took the opportunity to convey the fact that he would welcome them only if they were disguised and undercover.<sup>148</sup> The British did not see this decision as a final one but as an interim arrangement until De Gasperi was strong enough to disregard the views of his Communist coalition partners.

During 1947, international and domestic developments conspired to ensure political triumph of the Christian Democrats. With the announcement of the Truman Doctrine in March, perceived by De Gasperi as guaranteeing Italy as well,<sup>149</sup> the signing of the Peace Treaty, the acceptance of the Constitution by the Italian Parliament and the split of the Italian Socialist Party, the PSIUP, De Gasperi decided with the encouragement of the Americans, to ditch the PCI and the PSIUP, his 'disloyal coalition allies', from his government.<sup>150</sup> What,

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<sup>147</sup>. FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, p. 950; Miller, op. cit., pp. 191-2, 203, 215 and 230.

<sup>148</sup>. FO 371/67792/Z2547/135/22, 11-3-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 580, Charles to FO, 8-3-1947; ibid., Z2739/135/22, 17-3-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 618, Charles to FO, 13-3-1947; ibid., Z4523/135/22, 12-5-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1053, Charles to FO, 8-5-1947; ibid., Z5735/135/22, 9-6-1947, minutes by Brown, 23-6-1947; FO 371/67793/Z8558/135/22, 29-9-1947, minutes by Brown, 3-10-1947 and Harvey, 6-10-1947.

<sup>149</sup>. Ginsborg, op. cit., p.111; Gambino, op. cit., p. 334; Harper, J.L., *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945-8*, Cambridge, 1986, pp.119 and 131-4.

<sup>150</sup>. Clarke, op. cit., p. 323-5; Gambino, A., *Andreotti: Intervista sul De Gasperi*, Bari, 1977, pp. 72-73; Gambino, op. cit., pp. 263-4; Ginsborg, op. cit., p. 112; Mammarella, op. cit., pp. 138-40 and 146-7.

however, gave De Gasperi the parliamentary clout to play such a bold hand with such brutal finesse was the split in the Italian Socialist Party. The *Palazzo Barberini* schism was the result of the evident disquiet felt by many prominent socialists with the Pact of Unity. Giuseppe Saragat, the moderate socialist, decided that the so-called 'fusionist' line was not for him and in January 1947 he decided to form his own party. He took with him enough Socialist deputies as to weaken the PSIUP to such a degree that it gave De Gasperi the chance to govern Italy without the support of the Left anymore.<sup>151</sup> The subsequent resignation of De Gasperi's government plunged Italy into a crisis. Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the PCI, was oblivious to the machinations of De Gasperi and helped the latter in facilitating the signing of the universally unpopular Italian Peace Treaty and in the enshrining of Mussolini's Lateran Pacts and the Concordat with the Vatican of 1929 into the Constitution of the Republic as article 7, much to the disgust of the other anti-clerical parties.<sup>152</sup> The political crisis was resolved with the ditching of the PCI and PSI from government and the announcement of the first *monocolore* Christian Democratic government in the history of the Italian Republic on 31 May 1947.

The successful outcome of the 'exclusion crisis' that led to the creation of the first Communist-free Cabinet in Italy since 1944 and the banishment of the Italian Communists to the political wilderness rekindled hopes in the Foreign Office that Count Sforza would reverse his statement on the missions and that now he would welcome them.<sup>153</sup> The Foreign Office decided to pursue the

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<sup>151</sup>. Ibid.; Gambino, op. cit., pp. 261-91; Hughes, op. cit. p.145.

<sup>152</sup>. Hughes, op. cit., p. 146; Andreotti, G., *Lives*, London, 1988, p. 29; Travis, op. cit. p. 102.

<sup>153</sup>. FO 371/67792/Z4523/135/22, 12-5-1947, telegram, no. 1053, Charles to FO, 8-5-1947; ibid., Z5735/135/22, 9-6-1947, minute by Brown, 23-6-1947; FO 371/67793/Z8558/135/22, 29-8-1947, minutes by Brown, 3-10-1947 and Harvey, 6-10-1947.

missions idea with renewed effort by refashioning its plans and once again making the offer of liaison staff for the Italian services, the upkeep of which would be supplemented by the Italians.<sup>154</sup> However a positive response from the Italians was still not forthcoming. This precipitated intense discussion within the Foreign Office with the Italian Desk advocating the cancellation of the British offer and Sir Oliver Harvey, the Superintending Under-Secretary of the Western Department, supporting the view that Britain ought to persevere and continue pressurising the Italians into accepting the scheme. Characteristically, F.D.W. Brown of the Italian Desk of the Western Department minuted :

I do not think we need make any further effort to force these missions down the Italians' throat and if the Italians are still reluctant to accept I think we should abandon the whole scheme...<sup>155</sup>

Harvey went on to propose however, that the issue ought to be raised during Sforza's visit to London in autumn 1947.<sup>156</sup>

By 1947 Italian public opinion was not particularly friendly towards Britain and it soon became evident that British influence in the internal affairs of the country had been replaced by that of America. The reputation of Britain had suffered in the main because of its decision to grant independence to India and to withdraw from Greece. The announcement of the Truman Doctrine had transformed America in the minds of many Italians as the only guarantor against the USSR. The announcement of the ERP had shown that America was a universal provider. Italians had also become aware of Britain's acute

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<sup>154</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM4271/187/22, 18-12-1946, Hoyer-Millar to S. J. Baker, Home Office, 23-1-1947.

<sup>155</sup>. FO 371/67793/Z8558/135/22, 29-9-1947, minutes, Brown, 3-10-1947 and Harvey, 6-10-1947; *ibid.*, Z8639/135/22, 1-10-1947, Aide Memoir, 'Possible British Assistance to Italian Armed Forces in the Post Treaty Period', 25-8-1947; *ibid.*, Z7453/135/22, 15-8-1947, telegram, no. 1753, FO to Rome, 22-8-1947.

<sup>156</sup>. *Ibid.*

economic problems and this had raised serious doubts in Britain's ability to pursue its own foreign policy and exert influence in Italian affairs.<sup>157</sup>

The British government fought back against such notions by attempting to restore good relations with Italy and at the same time it sought to neutralize the influence of the PCI in the run up to Italy's first general election since the collapse of Fascism. Britain and Italy signed a financial agreement and Bevin took steps to support Saragat. Morgan Phillips', the Secretary of the Labour Party, letter to Italian trade unionists in December 1947 was only one manifestation of this more-proactive policy.<sup>158</sup> Britain tried, simultaneously to strengthen cultural relations between the two countries by inviting Italian journalists to Britain to see for themselves the 'English Revolution' in social and industrial-relations reform. The exhibition 'Britain Today' which was presented in many urban centres in Italy was particularly successful and drew many spectators from all walks of life and not just the middle and upper classes who usually frequented such events. As the relations between the two countries gradually became more positive some circles in Italy came to perceive Britain as a country which could exercise some restraint over the US.<sup>159</sup> M.N.F. Steward, the Press Officer of the Embassy in Rome, reported that this initiative had paid major dividends when up to forty articles extolling British achievements could be traced back to participants in the scheme and that even *Avanti!* and *L'Unità* had stopped attacking British imperialism. *Avanti!* had

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<sup>157</sup>. FO 953/70/PW4830/511/922, 8-9-1947, 'Confidential Report on Information work in Italy, April to June 1947', drafted by M.N.F. Steward, Information Officer, British Embassy in Rome, 31-8-1947.

<sup>158</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>159</sup>. FO 953/70/PW4830/511/922, 8-9-1947, 'Confidential Report on Information work in Italy, April to June 1947', drafted by Steward, 31-8-1947.



gone even so far as to call Bevin, the natural leader of Europe.<sup>160</sup>

In autumn 1947 Count Carlo Sforza visited London. The visit was considered a major success especially since Bevin agreed to return to Italy Britain's share of reparations from the Italian Fleet.<sup>161</sup> Sir Oliver Harvey decided that the time was opportune for him to raise the matter of the missions with Count Zoppi, the director general of the Italian Foreign Ministry. Zoppi was extremely forthcoming and assured Harvey that the Italian army had decided to accept the attachment of 'technical experts' but that the Italian navy and air force had not as yet reached a final decision. He went on to state that the Italian government was all in favour of the missions and more than willing to pay for their living costs. Indeed, he was so positive that he told Harvey that the Ministry would confirm this decision in a formal reply to the British Embassy as soon as possible.<sup>162</sup>

The Rome Embassy and the Foreign Office were to wait in vain for the reply Zoppi had promised. The War Office pressured the Foreign Office to keep exerting pressure on Italy on the familiar grounds that the missions would strengthen Britain's ability to keep Italy within its orbit and prevent the Russians from supplanting its influence in the region. The War Office suggested that the Foreign Office should urge the Italians to come up with an affirmative decision

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<sup>160</sup>. FO 953/431/PW1000/523/922, 29-6-1948, 'Quarterly Report on Information Work in Italy, January - March 1948, 28-5-1948.

<sup>161</sup>. Varsori, A., 'L'incerta rinascita di una "tradizionale amizia": I colloqui Bevin-Sforza dell' ottobre 1947', *Storia Contemporanea*, Vol. XVI, 1984, pp. 593-645, *passim*.

<sup>162</sup>. FO 371/67793/Z9572/135/22, 3-11-1947, memorandum by Brown, 25-10-1947; unsigned, undated, record of Harvey-Zoppi meeting; *ibid.*, Z9520/135/22, 1-11-1947, letter, Chancery, Rome, to Western Department, 28-10-1947; *ibid.*, Z9572/135/22, 3-11-1947, minute by Brown, 25-10-1947; letter, Western Department to Rome, 8-11-1947.

by 11 November 1947.<sup>163</sup> Eventually, in May 1948, Sir Victor Mallet, the British Ambassador in Rome, was told formally that the Italian government could not endorse the attachment of a mission to its armed forces.<sup>164</sup> The Foreign Office's conclusion was that the Italians were revelling in their newly found independence and were hiding behind excuses of budgetary difficulties and the potential reactions of the Soviets. Bevin accepted the Italian decision. He had by now come to the decision that Italian security and defence would be better considered when Italy became a member of the BTO and these matters were entertained in connection with arrangements for mutual assistance.<sup>165</sup> The Ministry of Defence also agreed that the plans should be dropped. It recognized that any further pressure on Italy to accept the missions would mean that Britain would have to pay and that the Ministry would have to press the Treasury to fund the living costs of the mission personnel. The Ministry of Defence was reluctant to do so. Thus, the issue was shelved.<sup>166</sup>

The rejection of the British plans by the Italian government did not signal the end of British interest in the fortunes of the Italian armed forces nor did it come as a disappointment for Britain which embarked on implementing its fall-back position with regards to the Italian security forces. Thus, Britain substituted the now defunct idea of missions with the provision of training of the Italian armed

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<sup>163</sup>. Ibid., Z8817/135/22, 8-10-1947, letter, Brown to B.N.L. Ditmas, WO, 7-10-1947.

<sup>164</sup>. FO 371/73174/Z3972/274/22, 11-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 153, Mallet to Bevin, 4-5-1948.

<sup>165</sup>. Ibid., confidential, letter, FO to WO, 25-5-1948; FO 371/73174/Z4639/274/22, 5-6-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 510, Bevin to Mallet, 12-6-1948.

<sup>166</sup>. Ibid., letter, MoD to FO, 2-6-1948.

and police forces by inviting Italian officers for training in the UK.<sup>167</sup> This succeeded in enabling the British to keep a close eye on the state and morale of the Italian armed forces which was Britain's main concern. British interest in strengthening Italy's forces continued for as long as the PCI was strong and capable of internal subversion. The British recognised the fact that the Italian armed forces were regarded as 'virtually useless for modern warfare'. However, they viewed the malaise inflicting the Italians as being caused not by the draconian provisions of the Peace Treaty but by the lack of suitable equipment and training.<sup>168</sup>

The British policy towards Italy in the immediate post-Treaty period always remained clear and steadfast, namely that the Italian armed forces had to be improved within Treaty limits to the degree that Italy's ability to defend itself was once again restored.<sup>169</sup> It was also its policy that the military clauses of the Treaty had to be implemented in order to uphold, even notionally, British rights with regards to the implementation of similar clauses in the Balkan Peace Treaties.<sup>170</sup> It was understood however that implementation should not allow for a further deterioration in Italy's ability to defend itself. This brought the British authorities in Rome in conflict at times with their task of enforcing the provisions of the Peace Treaty. Their fear that the Italian army alone could not deal effectively with internal armed disorders made them tolerate many

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<sup>167</sup>. FO 371/73174/Z1107/274/22, 10-2-1948, *Note Verbale*: Mallet to Italian Foreign Ministry, 5-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z3047/274/22, 12-4-1948, Rome Chancery to FO, 2-4-1948.

<sup>168</sup>. FO 371/73172/Z5320/167/22, 30-6-1948, secret, letter, Ward to P.M. Crosthwaite, head of Western Department, 24-6-1948.

<sup>169</sup>. *Ibid.*; FO 371/73172/Z2011/167/22, 22-3-1948, minute by A.D.F. Pemberton-Pigott, 17-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z4162/167/22, 18-5-1948, minute by Brown, 28-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 157, Mallet to Bevin, 12-5-1948.

<sup>170</sup>. *Ibid.*, Z2011/167/22, 22-3-1948, Pemberton-Pigott, 17-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z9649/167/22, 26-11-1948, minute by Brown, 6-12-1948.

breaches of Articles 53, 61, 63, and 67 of the Peace Treaty by the Italian armed forces and more particularly by the police. These breaches included personnel numbers above ceiling levels and the arming of the *Sicurezza Pubblica* to such a degree that they possessed more fire power per battalion than their British counterparts.<sup>171</sup> Britain had also realised from the beginning that enforcement of the Treaty had to be carried out collectively and not unilaterally. America indicated from early on that it was not prepared to take a rigorous line towards enforcement.<sup>172</sup> Nevertheless, the Foreign Office felt that Britain should not sanction such breaches openly and that its policy should continue to be directed towards ensuring that Italy took reasonable steps to comply with its Treaty obligations and that any breaches were concessions on the part of the enforcement agencies and were not to be presented by the Italians as a *fait accompli*.<sup>173</sup>

This policy continued even after the inclusion of Italy in the North Atlantic Treaty of April 1949 as a founding member. Both the Foreign Office and the British military, despite their reluctance to see Italy included in NATO, agreed that as a member of the Atlantic Pact it had to become militarily as strong as possible as soon as possible. A stronger Italy was in Britain's interest. However, the British approach on how to strengthen Italy differed substantially from the American one. The British considered that Italy already had enough

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<sup>171</sup>. FO 371/73234/Z9515/9515/22, 22-11-1948, secret, despatch, no. 380, Mallet to McNeil, 16-11-1948, minute by McNab, Military *Attaché*, Rome; FO 371/73172/9649/167/22, secret, despatch, no. 382, Mallet to McNeil, 9-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z2011/167/22, 22-3-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 17-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z4162/167/22, 18-5-1948, minute by Brown, 28-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 157, Mallet to Bevin, 12-5-1948.

<sup>172</sup>. *Ibid.*, Z1336/167/22, 17-2-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 19-2-1948, despatch, no. 58, Mallet to Bevin, 6-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z2011/167/22, 22-3-1948, Pemberton-Pigott, 17-3-1948.

<sup>173</sup>. FO 371/73172/Z2011/167/22, 22-3-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 17-3-1948.

scope to make its armed forces much more efficient and that it had some way to go before it reached the levels of preparation proscribed by the Peace Treaty. They also considered it inexpedient to violate openly the provisions of the Peace Treaty. They were not averse to turning a blind eye from time to time to Italian violations, but they felt that sanctioning overt violations would play straight into the hands of PCI and Soviet propagandists. Indeed, the Soviet Note of 19 July had protested against Italian inclusion in NATO exactly along these lines. The British view was that the best way forward was to strengthen the Italian armed forces within Peace Treaty limits.<sup>174</sup> Because of this, and not because of any feeling of gratuitous vengeance, Britain adopted a stricter approach towards the enforcement of the military clauses of the Treaty than the United States. As a consequence, each time the British sought to uphold the limitations imposed by the Treaty they found themselves obstructed by the Americans who maintained that Italy ought to be allowed some leeway.

The Rome Embassy observed this apparent divergence of policy between Britain and America with alarm. On the one hand, the vestiges of British influence in the area were slipping away because of the bitterness the British attitude was generating among Italians. As the British Ambassador put it, 'it is we who get the kicks and the Americans who get the credit'. On the other hand, this public rift seemed certain to have an impact on the implementation of the Peace Treaty. The enforcement of the Treaty, so recently ratified, was being undermined because the Italians could now play off the British against the

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<sup>174</sup>. FO 371/79240/Z2624/1074/72, 21-3-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 105, Mallet to Bevin, 22-3-1948; FRUS, 1948, Vol. IV, pp. 261-5; Smith, *The US, Italy and NATO*, pp. 93-4; Sforza, *Cinque Anni*, pp. 258-9; RIIA, Carlyle, M., (ed.), *Documents in International Affairs, 1949-50*, London, 1953, pp. 268-9.

Americans.<sup>175</sup> Anglo-American differences over the implementation of the military clauses of the Treaty mirrored their divergent attitudes on the value they attached to the defence of Italy. The Truman Administration had made Italian defence a priority. It was determined to build up Italy to be able to withstand a Soviet attack as soon as possible. It was even prepared to turn a blind eye to some violations of the Peace Treaty so long as it improved Italy's parlous military weakness.<sup>176</sup>

Two incidents in particular, brought the British and the Americans into confrontation; over the 'Torus project' and Italian arms exports.<sup>177</sup> During March and April 1949 the Italians declared a strong interest in acquiring a German torpedo boat called 'Torus' from an American source and they tried to enlist British support. The British government, despite personal pleas from Sforza and Pacciardi, the Italian Minister of Defence, opposed the idea because it would openly contravene the Peace Treaty, specifically articles 52 and 69 of the Treaty which forbade Italy explicitly from acquiring war materials of German origin or design and constructing, acquiring, employing or experimenting with motor torpedo boats.<sup>178</sup> The Americans adopted a diametrically opposed position. They maintained that article 52 did not apply because Hunter, the vendor, was an American citizen and thus his boat was an American vessel. The United States succeeded in overriding article 52 and then proceeded to ignore the provisions of article 69 by allowing the Italians not

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<sup>175</sup>. FO 371/79349/Z7984/10535/22, 8-12-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 739, Mallet to Attlee, 1-12-1949; DEFE 5/16, top secret, COS(49)327, 'Policy towards the Italian Armed Forces, 4-10-1949.

<sup>176</sup>. Miller, op. cit., pp. 175-6, 193-205, and 219-23; Smith, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>177</sup>. DEFE 5/16, top secret, COS(49)327, Annex, 4-10-1949.

<sup>178</sup>. FO 371/79349/Z7984/10535/22, 8-12-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 739, Mallet to Attlee, 1-12-1949; Wheeler-Bennett and Nichols, op. cit., pp. 674 and 678.

only to complete the transaction with Hunter which gave them 'Torus' but also to buy some ex-German mine sweepers from the United States Office of Foreign Liquidator. The latter purchase openly contravened articles 52 and 56 of the Treaty, both of which prohibited the Italian navy from obtaining such vessels.<sup>179</sup>

The British were kept in the dark about the minesweeper deal. They only realized what had happened from reports in the Italian press. The Americans maintained that nothing untoward had occurred, claiming that the mine sweepers were not war material as they had been disarmed and were not to be incorporated directly into the Italian navy. This of course begged the question as to why in that case Italy needed them in the first place. The Italians used the incident to embarrass the British and suggested that it was about time they took a leaf out of the American's book and adopted a more relaxed approach towards the implementation of the Peace Treaty.<sup>180</sup> Sir Victor Mallet accepted the need for change. In his view, London was adopting a far too legalistic and rigid an approach in interpreting the terms of the Peace Treaty which merely underlined Britain's ineffectualness, since the Italians were regularly reminded that so long as they turned to the Americans for support, they could always get their way.<sup>181</sup> The British government recognising that its last vestiges of influence in Italy would be totally eroded should it continue alone in insisting upon the strict implementation of the terms of the Treaty, reluctantly suggested to the Americans that the two countries should liaise and coordinate policy on such matters before decisions were communicated to the

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<sup>179</sup>. Ibid.; DEFE 5/16, secret, COS(49)327, Annex, 4-10-1949; Wheeler-Bennett and Nichols, op. cit., p. 678.

<sup>180</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>181</sup>. Ibid.

Italians.<sup>182</sup>

Almost immediately afterwards a second incident occurred over Italian arms exports which were prohibited *a fortiori* by the Treaty. Article 53 forbade Italy to 'manufacture or possess either publicly or privately any war materials different in type from, or exceeding in quantity that required and permitted for their forces'.<sup>183</sup> But London received numerous intelligence reports suggesting that the Italians were cultivating trading links in arms exports with countries in the Middle East and South East Asia. The same source also maintained that the Italian government was actively assisting these transactions, which included Sherman tanks, aircraft, artillery pieces and large quantities of small guns. The company Vickers-Armstrong also tipped off Whitehall that the Italians were tendering for an order to construct a destroyer for Venezuela. Though there was some sympathy for Italy straying slightly from the Treaty in order to improve its military strength, British officials could not bring themselves to tolerate open and flagrant breaches of the letter and spirit of the treaty. Their main concerns here were twofold. First, there was anxiety that such arms exports could at a future date be used against British forces. A case in point was the suspected sale of such material to Guatemala, which remained in dispute over the frontier with neighbouring British Honduras.<sup>184</sup> Secondly, there was the worry that if Italy actively pursued an energetic arms trade, it would deplete its already scarce resources and consequently become even more dependent on the US. In turn this would mean that US supplies to other European countries would decrease and thus affect the security of Western

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<sup>182</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>183</sup>. Wheeler-Bennett and Nichols, op. cit., pp. 674.

<sup>184</sup>. DEFE 4/25, top secret, COS(49)155th mtg, 10-10-1949; DEFE 5/16, top secret, COS(49)327, 4-10-1949.



Europe.<sup>185</sup> By this stage, British influence over Italy had sharply diminished. The Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Office concluded that Britain must therefore persuade the US to adopt a common policy towards the Italian armed forces and Italian armed exports and therefore they passed on to Washington all the information they had.<sup>186</sup>

Wholesale reorganization and reconstruction of the Italian armed forces was not to occur until after the creation of NATO and the decision of the US to commit itself unquestioningly to the defence of Europe after the Korean War and the adoption of NSC-68.<sup>187</sup> The reconstruction was undertaken under the auspices the United States and the armed forces were under the control of the American military and right wing elements of the DC rather than the Italian State and this encouraged the creation of shambolic paramilitary organisations such as 'Gladio'. All in all, a very different force than the one Britain had originally in mind.

### **Conclusion.**

In the early postwar period Britain played a crucial role in reconstructing, re-equipping and preparing the Italian armed and police forces for the tasks of defending their country from internal and external subversion. Planning focused mainly on providing equipment and attaching missions to the Italian defence and internal security forces. Britain's objective had been to perpetuate its involvement in Italian affairs and to safeguard its position in Western Europe and the Middle East. British plans for restructuring and re-equipping the Italian

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<sup>185</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>186</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>187</sup>. Nuti, op. cit., pp. 205-240; Gaddis, J.L., *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, New York, 1982, pp. 89-126; Smith, op. cit., pp. 104-176, passim.

armed forces could not be pursued without the cooperation or the complicity of the United States. Britain simply lacked the financial means to undertake such a task alone. At the same time, the Americans were becoming increasingly involved in Italy, partly because of the influence of the vociferous Italian lobby on the Democratic Administration, but more importantly, because the United States was coming to terms with its superpower status, the emergence of the Cold War and the determination of the Truman Administration from early on to make the defence of Italy one of its top priorities. From June 1946 onwards Washington became increasingly aware that if it wanted to see the Italian armed forces improve it would have to offer up military assistance and that such assistance would be quite advantageous to them as it would increase their leverage over Italian affairs.<sup>188</sup> By the end of 1947 however, and with the withdrawal of Allied troops from Italy, the space for manoeuvre on the British side was shrinking rapidly. Thus, Britain came to reap the bitter harvest of the intransigent, punitive and unsympathetic attitude shown to Italy by Eden and Churchill. The Labour government's tendency to occupy the high moral ground succeeded in antagonizing the Italian military and politicians and led in the end, along with De Gasperi's unwillingness to accept missions supplied by just one of the Allied Powers, to the demise of the British plans.<sup>189</sup> Thus, Britain had no option but to accept that the United States had assumed a hegemonic position over Italian affairs not only in economic matters but also in military affairs too. Consequently, it was under American tutelage, resources and assistance that the Italian armed forces were rebuilt and rearmed.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>. Miller, op. cit., p. 192.

<sup>189</sup>. FO 371/67793/Z7217/135/22, 7-8-1947, letter, Ward to Crosthwaite, 30-7-1947.

<sup>190</sup>. Nuti, op. cit., pp. 205-240; Ellwood, 'Italy, Europe and the Cold War', pp. 36-41; Vannicelli, P., *Italy, NATO and the European Community: The Interplay of Foreign and Domestic Politics*, Harvard, 1974, pp. 4-7; Gaddis, J.L., *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, New York, 1982, pp. 89-126; Smith, op. cit., pp. 104-176, passim.

## Chapter Three

### **The 'British Way to Socialism': British Intervention in the Italian Elections of April 1948 and its Aftermath**

On 18 April 1948, Italy faced its first general election since Mussolini's successful 'march on Rome' in 1922. The West perceived Italy as being at a dangerous crossroads. It was seen as a country that was susceptible both to internal subversion because of the strength of its Communist Party, as well as a country that could be won by the PCI at the ballot box through its popularity and its electoral pact with the socialists. The choice Italians were faced with was either a straightforward endorsement or an outright rejection of Communism. A rejection of the Christian Democrats through the ballot box would mean the implicit and explicit rejection of the Western liberal democratic model and would impair Western prestige extensively. It would put in jeopardy the success of the European Recovery Programme (ERP) and it would call into question the effectiveness of containment. Above all, the West feared that a communist victory would strengthen immensely the Soviet Union and the appeal of Communism world-wide as it would make manifest the notion that the Western ideal had been found wanting and that it had been discarded not through the use of force but through the ballot box. These considerations made Britain and America decide to place all their might behind the Italian anti-communist forces in Italy in their efforts to ensure the frustration of all communist designs on and within Italy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>. Miller, J.E., 'Taking Off the Gloves: The United States and the Italian Election of 1948', *Diplomatic History*, no. 7, Winter, 1983, p. 47; Pisani, S., *The CIA and the Marshall Plan*, Edinburgh, 1991, p. 107; FRUS, 1948, Vol. 3, pp. 775-9; Bullock, op. cit., p. 501; Cook, D., *Forging the Alliance: NATO, 1945-1950*, London, 1989, p. 121; FO 371/73069/Z2642/2307/22, 30-3-1948, top secret, minute by F.K. Roberts, Bevin's private secretary, record of discussion between Bevin and L.W. Douglas, the American Ambassador in London, 26-2-1948; FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 15-3-1948, memorandum for the Secretary of State by Crosthwaite, 21-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z2053/93/22, 11-3-1948, meeting between Viscount Jowitt, the Lord Chancellor and the Pope, minute by Crosthwaite, 12-3-1948.

America embarked on a massive effort of overt and covert intervention utilising all the means it had at its disposal - falling short only of provoking civil war in Italy as a pretext of re-occupying it<sup>2</sup> - to ensure that the Italian elections did not hold any unwanted surprises and that the Italian Communists could not mount a Czech type coup against De Gasperi. This policy led to America 'taking off the gloves', as Miller has so eloquently commented.<sup>3</sup> The newly established organizations of the National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were mobilized to assess the danger and put together a programme of action that would forestall the possibility of a communist electoral victory. The massive American intervention in Italy in the lead up to the April election was both imaginative and intrusive and made use of direct and covert methods to achieve its ends. It was the prototype for similar American interventions in the domestic politics of all those countries which it believed were important to its national security during the entire Cold War period.<sup>4</sup> As Ginsborg has observed, it was also 'breathtaking in its contempt for any principle of "non intervention" in the internal affairs of an

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<sup>2</sup>. Miscamble, W.D., *George Kennan and the Making of American Foreign Policy, 1947-1950*, Princeton, 1992, pp. 102-6; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 848-9.

<sup>3</sup>. Miller, 'Taking Off the Gloves', p. 35; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 757-62; FO 371/73156/Z1319/93/22, 16-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 744, Inverchapel to FO, 14-2-1948.

<sup>4</sup>. Miller, 'Taking Off the Gloves', pp. 41-4, 47 and 52; Pisani, op. cit., pp. 6-7; Braden, T. 'The Birth of the CIA', *American Heritage*, Vol. 28, Feb., 1977, p. 13; Cline, R., *Secrets, Spies and Scholars*, Washington, 1976, pp. 98-102; Colby, W., and Forbath, P., *Honorable Men*, New York, 1978, p. 109; Corson, W.R., *The Armies of Ignorance: The Rise of the American Intelligence Empire*, New York, 1977, pp. 298-301; Kuniholm, B.R., *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey and Greece*, Princeton, 1980, pp. 423-4; Winks, R.W., *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-61*, New York, 1987, pp. 382-7; Divine, R., 'The Cold War and the Elections of 1948', *Journal of American History*, Vol. 59, June 1972; FRUS, 1947, Vol. V, 513-4, 575-80, 592-4 and 623-6; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 765-69, 775-79 and 845-46.

independent country'.<sup>5</sup>

The adoption of the Truman Doctrine was to result in a noticeable contraction of British power on the northern shores of the Mediterranean. Although Britain had been relegated to playing merely a supporting role to that of the US, a reality that which was manifested in its policies towards Italy, Britain nevertheless remained a significant force in the influencing of developments in and the shaping of post-fascist Italy. The existence of a huge network of British financial and economic interests, the close links between the British and Italian military as well as the Labour Party's links with the Italian socialist movement allowed Britain to continue to play a significant role in the affairs of the region. Britain's involvement in the Italian general election of 1948 was to be both decisive and uncompromising. The British decision to intervene was based on two equally important objectives: to defeat the electoral challenge of the combined PCI/PSIUP ticket and in the long run to replace Nenni's *Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria* (PSIUP) with a genuine social democratic force based on the ideals of the 'British way to socialism'. The British Government had no doubts whatsoever that De Gasperi, his Christian Democrats and collaborators, especially Saragat's secessionist socialists, should be given all the assistance they needed to defeat the looming threat of a PCI victory in April. Sir Victor A. L. Mallet had characterised the forthcoming electoral contest as 'the real crisis in Italian politics and far and away the most important event since the overthrow of Mussolini' and he recommended that HMG do 'everything in its power to help and encourage the Christian Democrats and their allies in the electoral battle'.<sup>6</sup> Bevin regarded Italy as

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<sup>5</sup>. Ginsborg, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>6</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1359/93/22, 17-2-1948, secret, personal, letter, Mallet to Kirkpatrick, Superintending Under-Secretary of the Western Department of the FO, 12-2-1948.

being the 'weakest link in the chain of anti-communist states'<sup>7</sup> and had assured Sforza that his government was determined to help the Italian government in its fight against communism.<sup>8</sup> British involvement in the election also became inevitable from the moment the British government resolved, at Bevin's insistence, that Britain had to give all the support it could to all democratic anti-communist elements in Europe in order to resist the spread of communism westwards. It was Bevin's strong contention that Britain was far better placed than America to offer an attractive ideological alternative to communism, one which would aim at the transformation of 'London into the Mecca for social democracy in Europe'.<sup>9</sup>

Despite their determination to accomplish these aims, the British favoured lower profile operations than the Americans.<sup>10</sup> The methods and tactics of British intervention were shaped by several considerations; first, concerns over the expediency of some of America's interventionist plans; second, the delicate state of Anglo-Italian relations; third, the Foreign Office's belief that the Christian Democrats were, in any case, on course to win the elections; fourth, fears of undermining the last vestiges of British power in the region; fifth, the desire of the British government to push the Italian government into adopting a programme of social and economic reform which would contain the popularity of communism in Italy which it saw as grounded in the fundamental failure of the Italian government to tackle the chronic and complex problems of poverty,

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<sup>7</sup>. CAB 129/25, CM(48)72, top secret, memorandum, Bevin, 3-3-1948; CAB 128/12, CM27(48), 8-4-1948; FO 371/73069/Z2642/2307/22, 30-3-1948, top secret, minute by Roberts, 26-2-1948.

<sup>8</sup>. FO 371/73170/Z2479/165/22, 22-3-1948, despatch, no. 106, Mallet to Bevin, 19-3-1948.

<sup>9</sup>. CAB 129/23, CP(48)8, top secret, 4-1-1948.

<sup>10</sup>. FO 371/73069/Z2307/22, 30-3-1948, top secret, minute by Roberts, Bevin's private secretary, record of discussion between Bevin and Douglas, 26-2-1948.

ill-distribution of wealth and reform.<sup>11</sup> One spectacular area of British involvement was the intervention in the internal politics of the organised labour movement both on the party political and on the trade union level.<sup>12</sup> The many other areas of manipulation which Britain contemplated were in food supply, the involvement of Italy in African colonial development, Italian inclusion in the Brussels Treaty, naval visits to Italian ports, a solution to Italy's surplus population problem, colonial concessions, Franco-Italian border adjustments in favour of Italy, the future of Trieste and last but not least, a solution to the running sore of the Italian war criminality problem in Italy's favour by the waiving of all Western claims for the extradition of alleged Italian war criminals.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Legacy of 1947**

1947 was a critical year for the economic and political stabilization of the country and it carried with it the seeds that were to determine the attitude of Britain and America towards Italy in the run up to the 1948 election. The strains caused by the policy of containment and the announcement of the ERP in particular, were felt deeply in Italy as the whole political system relied on a tenuous co-existence of both Right and the Left in government. The *Palazzo Barberini* schism in 1946 that led to the splitting of the Italian Socialist Party

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<sup>11</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1740/93/22, 2-3-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 386, Mallet to FO, 29-2-1948.

<sup>12</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1398/93/22, 17-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 301, Mallet to Bevin, 17-2-1948; FO 371/73157/Z1957/93, 8-3-48, secret, telegram, Bevin to Inverchapel, 9-3-48.

<sup>13</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 15-3-1948, minutes by Crosthwaite, 21-2-1948 and 12-3-1948, and Kirkpatrick, 23-2-1948; FO 371/73180/Z1836/317/22, 28-2-1948, minute by Brown, 28-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z1625/317/22, 12-2-1948, letter, Rome to War Crimes Section, 25-2-1948; FO 371/73181/Z2755/317/22, 1-4-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 10-4-1948; FO 371/73172/Z4162/167/22, 18-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 157, Mallet to Bevin, 12-5-1948; FO 371/73180/Z3535/317/22, 27-4-1948, letter, Mallet to Sforza, 16-4-1948

and the May 1947 exclusion crisis resulted in the throwing of the PCI and PSI out of government. The West's campaign to neutralize the PCI and to ensure the electoral victory of the Christian Democrats began as soon as De Gasperi's first *monocolore* government was formed. Neither Britain or America raised an eyebrow when it became clear that De Gasperi's new government was relying on support from the neo-fascist *Uomo Qualunque* party and the monarchists. In a sense the election campaign for the 1948 elections had already begun.<sup>14</sup>

Exclusion from power had turned PCI from a party of government back into a party of protest. For the PCI this meant that it had to combine the principles of 'la svolta di Salerno' with intimidatory and clandestine actions in its efforts to compel De Gasperi to take them back into government by showing him that he could not govern without communist support.<sup>15</sup> This led to the adoption of scare tactics by Togliatti which aimed at presenting the PCI as a revolutionary party when in fact it had opted for, more or less, democratic action. Togliatti's posturing speech in Parma in September 1947, advocated the possibility of the PCI using its 30,000 armed men against the government when, in reality, he was even reluctant to go ahead with the strike activity of autumn 1947.<sup>16</sup> Political scientists have termed the policy of the PCI as one of 'doppiezza' - duplicity - which failed to induce De Gasperi to take them back and succeeded in scaring the West and the Vatican into backing De Gasperi to the hilt and condemning to PCI from imposed 'self-exclusion' to ostracization.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>. Ginsborg, op. cit., pp. 189; Mammarella, op. cit., pp. 138-40.

<sup>15</sup>. Ginsborg, P., *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics, 1943-1988*, London, 1990, p. 153.

<sup>16</sup>. Miller, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>17</sup>. Di Loreto, P., *Togliatti e la "doppiezza"*, Bologna, 1991, pp. 168-9; McCarthy, P., *The Crisis of the Italian State: From the Origins of the Cold War to the Fall of Berlusconi*, London, 1995, pp. 38-40; Agosti, A., 'Il PCI e la svolta di 1947', *Studi Storici*, no. 1, 1990, pp. 53-88.



The fact that the Soviet Union had decided to use Italy through the Cominform, as a means of indicating its displeasure with the ERP and its objectives, gave Togliatti's pronouncements a distinctly sinister and threatening hue. The inclusion of the PCI in the Cominform made Italy appear uniquely exposed to Soviet pressure tactics. Thus, the outcome of the wave of strikes in late 1947 which was foisted on the PCI by the Cominform with the objective of sabotaging the chances of the Marshall Plan,<sup>18</sup> despite its limited success and the half-hearted zeal with which it was pursued, led Western governments to believe that it was a 'dress rehearsal' for the coming revolution.<sup>19</sup> The strikes created the impression that Italy was a prime target for subversion. No one in the West was prepared to concede the fact that the PCI had not initiated the strikes but that it had merely decided, after its expulsion from government, not to exercise its restraining role on working class protest as it had done in the past and that these protests were primarily a result of the deflationary policies that Luigi Einaudi, the Minister of the Budget, had introduced and which had hit working class incomes hard.<sup>20</sup>

Indicative of the mood of the West was the analysis of the 'Russia Committee' of the Foreign Office, which concluded that the 'recent strikes' in Italy had caused a major setback to Italian economic recovery and had put Italian

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<sup>18</sup>. CAB 129/25, CP(48)72, memorandum by Bevin, 'The Threat to Western Civilization', 3-3-1948.

<sup>19</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 724-9; Bocca, *op cit.*, pp. 486-7; Ginsborg, *op. cit.*, p. 114; Miller, 'Taking Off the Gloves', pp. 41-3; Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-36.

<sup>20</sup>. Miller, *The United States and Italy*, p. 238; Harper, J.L., *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945-48*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 148.

political stability in jeopardy.<sup>21</sup> Such pessimistic assessments clouded the real significance of the 1947 strikes which, according to Guiglielmo Emanuele, the editor of the *Corriere della Sera*, was that the PCI did not have the ability to bring about a successful *coup d'état* without considerable foreign support.<sup>22</sup> Such support was difficult for either the USSR or Yugoslavia to provide without risking a war with the US and for which they were not ready. Truman's declaration of 13 December 1947 had seen to this. On the day of the withdrawal of the Allied Forces from Italy the President of the United States declared America's continued interest in preserving Italy as a 'free and independent country' and that 'the US would not remain indifferent to any intervention direct or indirect in its internal affairs'.<sup>23</sup> Even the most successful communist strike, the general strike in Milan which had succeeded in putting the city under PCI control, did not perturb the Italian government which took it in its stride.<sup>24</sup> Togliatti's address to the PSIUP Congress on 19-23 January 1948, was to reflect the inability of the Left to gain power through a *coup d'état*. In a conciliatory speech, he stressed repeatedly his party's determination to

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<sup>21</sup>. FO 371/71649/N3947/31/38, 23-3-1948, confidential letter, Rome to Northern Department, 18-3-1948; minute by Brown, 25-3-1948. On the Russia Committee see Merrick, R., 'The Russia Committee of the British Foreign Office and the Cold War, 1946-47', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 20, 1985, pp. 453-68.

<sup>22</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z96/93/22, 5-1-1948, top secret, letter, Mallet to Crosthwaite, 18-12-1947.

<sup>23</sup>. Ibid., Z97/93/22, 5-1-1948, top secret, letter, Mallet to Warner, superintending under-secretary of the Western European Information (WEID) and the Information Policy (IPD) Departments, 23-12-1947; FO 371/73158/Z3018/93/22, 12-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 650, 10-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z3019/93/2, 12-4-1948, minute by Brown, 12-4-1948; secret, telegram, no. 651, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948; Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 31; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 729, 740 and 746-52; Ellwood, D.W., *Rebuilding Europe: Western Europe, America and Postwar Reconstruction*, London, 1992, p. 114; Miller, *The United States and Italy*, p. 241; Serfaty, S., 'The United states and the PCI: The Year of Decision 1947', in Serfaty, S., and Grey, L., *The Italian Communist Party: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Westport, 1980, pp. 59-74, *passim*.

<sup>24</sup>. FO 371/67768/Z10291/32/22, 27-11-1947, important, telegram, no. 2204, Mallet to FO, 26-1-1947.

gain power through legal means.<sup>25</sup>

Mallet, although fully aware of the dangers Italy faced, did not subscribe to the alarmist assessments of the Italian situation as expounded by the Russia Committee. In his opinion, autumn 1947 had shown to the Italian Communists that the tactics of direct action and violence which they had used from September 1947 until December 1948 had resulted in dismal failure. The British Embassy in Rome had concluded that the strikes had been of short duration and sporadic and was in full agreement with Sforza's opinion that this agitation would not develop into 'an organized revolution' before the election.<sup>26</sup> Mallet believed that the PCI would try to get to power only through constitutional means.<sup>27</sup> He also judged that the strikes had not had a severe impact on the Italian economy, reporting that the Italian market had not suffered any serious shortages of goods and that the price index had not risen. In fact, the index of wholesale prices had begun to fall from September onwards.<sup>28</sup> He went on to explain that problems in the Italian economy were due primarily to the inability of the country to export its products. Italy's export problem was one of overpricing and not a lack of production of goods on time. It was simply a lack of international markets prepared to buy at Italian prices which were inflated by the pressure from government on industry to retain surplus labour in order to alleviate simmering social and economic tensions.<sup>29</sup> Mallet's assessments are borne out by statistics for this period. Einuadi's programme

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<sup>25</sup>. FO 371/73155Z701/93/22, 21-1-1948, report by W.H. Braine, Labour *Attaché*, Rome: 'Twentieth Sixth National Congress of the Italian Socialist Party', 20-1-1948.

<sup>26</sup>. FO 371/67768/Z10140/32/22, 18-11-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 2182, Mallet to FO, 22-11-1947.

<sup>27</sup>. FO 371/71649/N3497/31/38, 23-3-1948, confidential, letter, Rome to Northern Department, 18-3-1948.

<sup>28</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>. Ibid.

of deflating and reforming the Italian domestic economy had succeeded despite the strikes. Inflation was under control by the end of November. Bank deposits grew, confidence in the economy was reinforced and the Italian economy at last achieved its transition to a peace time mode of production.<sup>30</sup> Mallet went on to inform London that any marginal impact the strikes might have had on the Italian economy had been more than compensated for and rectified by the influx of the Interim Aid that the American Administration had rushed through the Congress.<sup>31</sup>

The latter half of 1947 witnessed the strengthening of the anti-communist forces of the Italian State. The forces of law and order had stood their ground and Mario Scelba, the Minister of the Interior, had managed to expel all the communists from the security forces.<sup>32</sup> Scelba proved to be both energetic and ruthless, showing little regard for issues of civil liberties and human rights and his methods went unchallenged within the DC.<sup>33</sup> He reinforced and re-equipped the police with up to date equipment such as tear gas and encouraged them to intervene brutally in the breaking up of proletarian or peasant demonstrations.<sup>34</sup> The police's attempt to demilitarize the North turned quickly into an anti-communist campaign. Hundreds of arrests were made and many arms caches were uncovered.<sup>35</sup> The Italian police authorities grew confident in their ability to deal with any type of disturbance. The Christian Democrats

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<sup>30</sup>. Mammarella, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2; Ginsborg, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>31</sup>. *Ibid.*; Miller, 'Taking Off the Gloves', pp. 42-3; Pisani, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-1.

<sup>32</sup>. Ferraresi, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Ceva, *op. cit.*, p.376; FO 800/471/ITALY, top secret, telegram, no. 2370, Mallet to Bevin, 24-12-1947; FO 371/73234/Z9515/9515/22, 22-11-1948, secret, despatch, no. 380, Mallet to H. McNeil, minister of state, FO, 16-11-1947.

<sup>33</sup>. Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-1.

<sup>34</sup>. Ginsborg, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>35</sup>. Travis, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.

had, in parallel, rationalised their organizational structure to such a degree as to be able to challenge the Communist party machine throughout the country.<sup>36</sup> In the meanwhile, the PCI had failed in its prime tactic of wearing down De Gasperi enough to be invited back into his government.<sup>37</sup> Mallet was sure that all the Communists could do was to try to paralyse large areas of the country and wreak economic havoc but that they could not overthrow De Gasperi without outside help. He concluded that the communist threat in Italy had been blunted by 'the grouping of the anti-communist forces and the wing of the American Eagle'.<sup>38</sup> He was not alone in these conclusions. Intelligence forecasts gathered by the Foreign Office pointed to a closely run election campaign from which the Christian Democrats would emerge as the largest single party with the PCI/PSIUP electoral alliance a close second. Even more reassuring to the Foreign Office was the prediction that the DC would be able to form a coalition with a majority that could ensure effective government and exclude the Left.<sup>39</sup> The Western Department of the Foreign Office had reached similar conclusions which were reinforced by the fact that Sforza himself was confident enough to admit to Antony Eden that the communists had been beaten.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z145/93/22, 7-1-1948, despatch, no. 559, Mallet to FO, 24-12-1947.

<sup>37</sup>. FO 371/67768/Z9929/32/22, 17-11-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 2140, Rome to FO, 14-11-1947; *ibid.*, Z10118/32/22, 21-11-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 2167, Mallet to FO, 20-11-1947.

<sup>38</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z97/93/22, 5-1-1948, top secret, letter, Mallet to Warner, 23-12-1947.

<sup>39</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z1814/93/22, 3-3-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott Italian Desk, 13-2-1948.

<sup>40</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z108/93/22, 6-1-1948, despatch, no. 564, Mallet to Bevin, 30-12-1947; FO 371/71694/N3947/31/38, 23-3-1948, minute by Brown, 25-3-1948.

### **British Involvement in the April Elections.**

Bevin was concerned that heavy-handed interventionist measures by the Americans could backfire and play directly into the hands of the Communists. The battles he had fought at the UNO with the Soviets over British intervention in Greece and their impact on world opinion had made him rather sensitive, at this stage, to accusations of intervention in the internal politics of another country.<sup>41</sup> He advised caution and resisted American pressure for the British to adopt a more visible policy of intervention. Bevin insisted on a more low key and subtle policy conducted behind the scenes.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, some of America's actions, motivated by its eagerness to help De Gasperi, ended up in causing embarrassment and in political blunder. In early January 1948, in a show of force, there was a series of high profile naval visits by US warships to major Italian ports. The show of force together with the American announcement of 3 January that the number of marines serving in the American Mediterranean Fleet would be increased, created a furore in Italy. It culminated in Soviet accusations that such an American presence in Italian waters contravened Article 73 of the Italian Peace Treaty.<sup>43</sup> It also received unfavourable publicity in the Italian Press<sup>44</sup> and gave the PCI the opportunity to portray De Gasperi

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<sup>41</sup>. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Yasamee, A.J. and Hamilton, K.A., (eds), *Documents on British Policy Overseas: The United Nations: Iran, Cold War and World Organisation, 1946-47*, (DBPO), series I, Vol. VII, London, 1995, pp. 17-2 and 27-8

<sup>42</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., pp. 544; FO 371/73157/Z1957/93, 8-3-48, secret, telegram, no. 2719, Bevin to Inverchapel, 9-3-48.

<sup>43</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z641/640/22, 26-1-1949, savingram, no. 10, Mallet to Attlee, 19-1-1948; FO 371/73166/Z840/128/22, 1-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 504, Inverchapel to FO, 1-2-1948.

<sup>44</sup>. FO 371/73166/Z246/128/22, 12-1-1948, telegram, no. 36, Mallet to FO, 9-1-1948; telegram, no. 37, Mallet to FO, 9-1-1948; FO 371/73195B/Z730/730/22, 28-1-1948, letter, Rome Chancery to Western Department, 10-1-1948.

and Sforza as men who had sold Italy out to American imperialism.<sup>45</sup>

Publicly, the Italian government provided a cover and declared that the visits took place with their agreement.<sup>46</sup> Privately, however, they were dismayed by the exploitation of the issue by the Left and the fact that they had had to place their armed forces on a high level of readiness. They asked the Americans to curtail this programme.<sup>47</sup> This experience made the British even more cautious and convinced them that their own tactics of intervention would have to be more understated.<sup>48</sup> Bevin suggested caution to the Americans.<sup>49</sup> He remained judicious throughout and he assessed the merits of every step of British involvement in the Italian elections with regards to its potential for embarrassment for the British government. The Italian Ambassador approached Frank K. Roberts, Bevin's private secretary, to ask him if any prominent members of the Labour Party or of the government were prepared to write articles for the *Corriere della Sera* or other wide-circulation newspapers which would demonstrate how far the British Labour Party had succeeded in raising the standards of living of ordinary British people. Bevin was quick to support the idea of Labour personalities giving interviews on the achievements of the Labour government but he poured cold water over the suggestion of government Ministers writing newspaper articles. He was hesitant to allow the Foreign Office to become openly involved in organizing these activities

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<sup>45</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z1548/640/22, 24-1-1948, savingram, no. 31, Mallet to Bevin, 20-2-1948.

<sup>46</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>. Ibid.; Maier, op. cit., p. 290.

<sup>48</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1102/93/22, 10-2-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 52, Mallet to Bevin, 2-2-1948; confidential, telegram, no. 353, Rome to FO, 24-2-1948; FO 371/73160/Z3549/93/22, 27-4-1948, despatch, no. 140, 'Quarterly Political Report for Italy during the First Quarter of 1948', Mallet to Bevin, 23-4-1948.

<sup>49</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., p. 544; FO 371/73157/Z1957/93/22, 8-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 2719, Bevin to Inverchapel, 9-3-1948.

because the whole exercise could backfire and could appear to be an overt intervention in Italian domestic politics.<sup>50</sup>

Britain's cautious approach was also influenced by the fact that the lead up to the Italian elections came at a very tense moment in Anglo-Italian relations. The Mogadishu incident had impaired seriously the already tense and difficult relationship between the two countries.<sup>51</sup> The British were concerned that the smallest mistake in their dealings with Italy at this moment could lead to the disappearance of any residual British influence in the peninsula and that it would have a knock on effect on the Italian election.<sup>52</sup> It was obvious that a prerequisite for a successful British intervention was the improvement of Anglo-Italian relations.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the British government embarked on the twin tasks of reducing tensions in Anglo-Italian relations and at the same time working towards helping the Italian government in its electoral struggle against the Left's Unity of Action Pact. A series of initiatives were undertaken to improve relations and no one worked harder on these than Ambassador Mallet.

Initially, the British government tried to bolster the Italian ego and sooth Italian

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Z2172/93/22, 15-3-48, minutes by Bevin, 12-3-1948 and Roberts, 9-3-48.

<sup>51</sup> Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, *Carte Gallarati Scotti*, undated and unsigned memorandum from London; Sforza to Duke Tommaso Gallarati Scotti, Italian Ambassador to the Court of St. James', 23-1-48; Gallarati Scotti to Zoppi, director of political affairs, MAE, 23-6-1948, cited in Vigezzi, B., 'Italy: the End of a Great Power and the Birth of a Democratic Power', in Becker, and Knipping, (eds), op. cit., p. 73. For a detailed treatment of this incident and its implications for Anglo-Italian relations see: Varsori, A., *Il diverso declino di due potenze coloniali. Gli eventi di Mogadiscio del gennaio 1948 e i rapporti anglo-italiani*, Roma, 1981, passim; Rossi, G., *L' Africa italiana verso l'indipendenza, 1941-9*, Milano, 1980, pp. 313-21. For a short account of this incident see p. 304, Chapter Five of this volume.

<sup>52</sup> CO 537/3316, CP(48)43, memorandum by E. Bevin, 4-2-48.

<sup>53</sup> FO 371/73193/Z1548/640/22, savingram, no. 31, Mallet to Bevin, 20-2-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 20-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z1977/640/22, 9-3-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 9-3-1948.



wounds over Mogadishu by granting permission to the head of the Italian Red Cross and the Italian Consul at Nairobi to visit Italian Somaliland. Then, progress was made in trade negotiations by allowing for an overall increase in Anglo-Italian trade exchanges and their extension to include additional products other than those traditionally traded between the two countries.<sup>54</sup> More crucially, what proved to be the turning point in relations between Britain and Italy was the visit of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Jowitt to Rome from 2 February to 5 March 1948. Lord Jowitt's statement of sympathy, on the day of his departure from Rome, for what Italian citizens had suffered during the Mogadishu riots, went a long way to mollifying Italian feelings. He also took the opportunity to remind Italians how important British friendship was for their country. In a broadcast over Italian radio, he used Garibaldi's words to illustrate his point, 'there should be a curse upon Italy, if ever she were to break away her friendship with Britain'.<sup>55</sup> Although Lord Jowitt's visit was in a private capacity, it was regarded by the Italians as being of high official and political importance.<sup>56</sup> It proved to be very successful in repairing some of the damage the Mogadishu incident had inflicted on Anglo-Italian relations. According to Victor Mallet it was 'invaluable' in stemming, at least temporarily, the bitter, anti-British hostility of the Italian Press.<sup>57</sup> The visit of the Lord Chancellor also had other important outcomes. In his discussions with leading politicians he let it be

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<sup>54</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 12-3-1948, minutes by Crosthwaite to Bevin, 21-2-1948 and 12-3-1948.

<sup>55</sup>. FO 371/73170/Z2479/165/22, 22-3-1948, despatch, no. 106, Ward to Bevin, 19-3-1948.

<sup>56</sup>. FO 371/73169/Z165/165/22, 8-1-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 26, Mallet to FO, 7-1-1948; letter, Bevin to Viscount Jowitt, the Lord Chancellor, 8-1-1948; *ibid.*, Z1163/165/22, 11-2-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 256, Mallet to FO, 10-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z1299/165/22, 16-2-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 284, Mallet to FO, 14-2-1948.

<sup>57</sup>. FO 371/73170/Z1959/165/22, 9-3-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 431, Mallet to FO, 6-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z2275/165/22, 17-3-1948, personal, letter, Mallet to Bevin, 6-3-1948.

known, beyond any doubt, that the Nennite PSIUP had the profound disapproval of the British Labour government and movement. Thus, the visit succeeded in improving Anglo-Italian relations and also signalled to the Italian government that the Lombardo-Saragat grouping had the undoubted support of the British government.<sup>58</sup>

Bevin believed that the most productive tactic was to encourage and capitalize on developments taking place within the Italian *body-politic*. In his mind, every public foreign policy initiative had to be followed by a series of informal manoeuvres in order to achieve optimum results. In his attempts to achieve this he employed not only the machinery of the state but also the International Department of the Labour Party.<sup>59</sup> Denis Healey, its energetic and charismatic International Secretary, spearheaded the campaign to moderate the behaviour of the Italian Socialist Party. During 1947, the Labour Party and the British government had to rethink and realign their policy towards the various exponents of Italian socialism. They moved from full support for Nenni in January 1947, to almost uncritical support for Saragat, as relations between East and West continued inexorably to plummet. Such a shift was not easy for a Labour government and Party that had traditionally championed the unity of the Italian socialist movement and had consistently regarded Nenni as a 'brilliant politician in all senses of the word' and Saragat as 'an ineffectual and

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<sup>58</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73160/Z3549/92/22, 27-4-1948, despatch, no. 140, 'Quarterly Political Report for Italy during the First Quarter of 1948', Mallet to Bevin, 23-4-1948; FO 371/73156/Z1102/93/22, 10-2-19448, confidential, despatch, no. 52, Mallet to Bevin, 2-2-1948.

<sup>59</sup>. Ibid.

extremely vain intellectual'.<sup>60</sup> Initially, the main thrust of Bevin's policy was aimed at precipitating changes within the PSIUP that would weaken the Unity of Action Pact which the PSIUP and the PCI had formed in 1946. The policy aimed at detaching Nenni from the Unity of Action Pact or failing that, at encouraging anti-communist elements within the PSIUP to break ranks with the Nenni faction and thus achieving the twin objectives of weakening the PSIUP, and by extension the PCI, whilst creating potential allies for the Christian Democrats.<sup>61</sup> The reinforcement of the Pact in December 1947 with the announcement that the PSIUP and the PCI would present themselves to the electorate as a single ticket and with unified lists caused great distress to Bevin as well as to many prominent Italian socialists such as Giuseppe Romita, Sandro Pertini and Ivan Matteo Lombardo. In fact, the latter felt compelled to follow Saragat out of *Palazzo Barberini*.<sup>62</sup> Defections from the PSIUP, however, brought with them more problems than direct solutions. Only a small rump of the party was prepared to follow Saragat and Lombardo out into the political wilderness which left Nenni mustering the overwhelming support of the party. London estimated that some of this lack of support for the secessionists would soon be rectified after the January Congress of the PSIUP and that the ostensible rejection of the ERP by Nenni would lead to substantial defections

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<sup>60</sup>. Labour History Archive and Study Centre, Museum of Labour History, Manchester: Labour Party Archives: International Office, 1947-48: 'Italy 1947 - Socialist Party'; Sebastiani, P., *Laburisti inglesi e socialisti italiani*, Rome, 1983, pp. 232-5; Varsori, A., 'Il Labour Party e la crisi del socialismo italiano, 1947-48', p. 163; Varsori, A., 'Bevin e Nenni, Ottobre 1946-Gennaio 1947: Una fase nei rapporti anglo-italiani del secondo dopoguerra', *Il politico*, Vol. XLIX, 1984, pp. 264-73.

<sup>61</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1398/93/22, 17-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 301, Mallet to Bevin, 17-2-1948; Reed, B, and Williams, G., *Denis Healey and the Politics of Power*, London, 1971, pp. 58-60; Healey, D., *The Time of my Life*, London, 1989, pp. 82-3.

<sup>62</sup>. For a detailed analysis of the *Palazzo Barberini* schism see: Nenni, P. *Tempo di guerra fredda: Diari, 1943-56*, Milano, 1981, pp. 282-335; Faenza, L., *La crisi del socialismo in Italia, 1946-66*, Bologna, 1967, pp. 26-47.

to Saragat.<sup>63</sup> These estimates were proved wrong by the bulk of the PSIUP membership. The PSIUP Congress produced massive support for Nenni and his policies: 67% of the delegates voted for the continuation of the electoral alliance with the PCI and 99% voted in favour of the formation of a 'popular democratic front' that would encompass all left wing parties.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the PCI and the PSIUP announced, in late January 1948, their common constitution of the Democratic Popular Front. These developments made Bevin realize beyond any doubt that Nenni's PSIUP would not abandon its collaborationist course. From this point on, Labour policy moved from driving a wedge between the PCI and the PSIUP to building up Saragat and Lombardo as the only alternatives for democratic socialist voters. Thus, the British government took steps to legitimize the split and ensured that the Saragat faction was treated by the Labour Party and the TUC as the real Socialist Party of Italy. It achieved this by marginalizing and alienating the PSIUP within the international socialist movement.<sup>65</sup>

The aim of this new policy was not simply a negative one, namely to destroy Nenni's PSIUP. Bevin was also motivated by the desire of replacing the PSIUP with a credible social democratic force reflecting the ideals of 'British socialism' and thus perpetuating a British influence in Italy.<sup>66</sup> To this end the Labour government worked tirelessly to build up the prestige of Saragat and the appeal of his party using the logic that the stronger the party emerged from the

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<sup>63</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z149/93/22, 7-1-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 14-12-1947.

<sup>64</sup>. Ibid., Z643/93/22, 26-1-1948, telegram, no. 140, Rome to FO, 24-4-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 27-1-1948.

<sup>65</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., pp. 543-5; Varsori, A., 'La Gran Bretagna e le elezioni politiche italiane del 18 aprile 1948', in *Storia contemporanea*, Vol. XIII, no. 1, 1982, pp. 5-71, passim; Sebastiani, op. cit., passim.

<sup>66</sup>. CAB 128/12, CM27(48), 8-4-1948.

elections the bigger the 'social democratic' input into the De Gasperi government and the bigger the influence of British Labour government on Italy.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately for the British, the resounding endorsement of the Nennite policies by the January Congress of the PSIUP showed that the Saragat faction did not have the capacity nor the time to be transformed into a force which could have a significant impact on the political scene in time for the elections. In view of this, British policy towards the secessionists moved away from the idea that 'Socialist Unity' could offer an instant democratic alternative to Nenni's PSIUP, to one that sought to build up Saragat and his collaborators into a useful ally to the Christian Democrats and as such to act as the stimulus and instigator of social reform in future Christian Democratic governments. This ideological shift meant that Britain had no other choice but to embark on a negative policy aimed at frustrating the PSIUP's way to power by isolating it in the international scene.<sup>68</sup>

The State Department felt that the British approach had been too subtle and anodyne so far and it urged Britain to adopt a more high profile interventionism. It believed that if Britain sanctioned Saragat publicly, his vote could double in the forthcoming election.<sup>69</sup> Mallet, too, supported this course of action and he suggested that the British Labour Party, Bevin and the government ought to condemn Nenni's policies and leadership publicly and express their support for the De Gasperi government with which Saragat had associated himself. He was certain that such an intercession would have a 'galvanizing effect' on the

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<sup>67</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z714/93/22, 28-1-1948, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott, 31-1-48, Crosthwaite, 31-1-1948, Margaret Carlyle, 4-2-1948; despatch, no. 40, Mallet to Bevin, 23-1-1948.

<sup>68</sup>. Ibid., Z634/93/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 27-1-1948.

<sup>69</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z1957/93/22, 8-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 2719, Bevin to Inverchapel, 9-3-1948.

Saragat electoral prospects because of the influence and glamour radiating from the Labour Party and government to the Continent. In his opinion this was the single most helpful step Britain could take to keep Italy this side of the Iron Curtain.<sup>70</sup> He went on to warn that such actions could not be postponed for ever 'without the grave risk of this country falling under communist control through the suicidal folly of Nenni and his clique'; furthermore, he hoped that such action would encourage waverers such as Romita to defect and join Saragat. The Foreign Office, too, had reached a similar conclusion that the best option now was to throw British support behind the Christian Democrats who 'with all their faults ... represented [the] only hope of a government on anything like social democratic lines'.<sup>71</sup>

Bevin did not need the encouragement of Washington nor of his Ambassador in Rome to prop up Saragat as he told Lewis W. Douglas, the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James', in no uncertain terms.<sup>72</sup> He believed, however, that the best way forward would be for the endorsement to come from the international socialist movement and not just from the British government. Since the Saragat and Lombardo factions were unlikely to draw much popular support, the Labour government felt that the unilateral support of the Labour Party would not have the effect of transforming their electoral outlook overnight. Thus, it was decided that the Labour Party ought to repudiate publicly Nenni's policy of collaboration with the Communists at the forthcoming

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<sup>70</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73156/Z1411/93/22, 19-2-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 309, 18-2-1948.

<sup>71</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73155/Z634/93/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 27-1-1948; FO 371/73156/Z1398/93/22, 17/2/1948, top secret, telegram, no. 301 Mallet to Bevin, 17-2-1948.

<sup>72</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z1957/93/22, 13-3-48, record of discussion between Bevin and Douglas, 6-3-48; FO 800/471/ITALY, top secret, record of discussion between Bevin and Mallet, 6-3-1948; FO 371/73199/Z2308/1392/22, 17-3-48, record of discussion between Bevin and Sforza, 15-3-48.

meeting of the Socialist parties of the sixteen ERP nations. Bevin immediately informed Douglas that the Trades Union Congress (TUC), in its efforts to strengthen Saragat, had invited a *Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro* (CGIL) grouping to their forthcoming conference on the ERP. This particular CGIL grouping had dissented from the majority CGIL decision to turn down the TUC invitation.<sup>73</sup> At such a meeting, Nenni's delegates would find it difficult, in any case, to justify their policy towards the Marshall Plan. For maximum impact Bevin advised that other Western European parties had to be induced to join in the condemnation of the PSIUP. The Western Department assessed that the most likely way of bringing about the intended results was to take measures to shift the waverers away from Nenni. Such an action would:

more than anything else put heart into the anti-communist parties in their election fight and would be the most [productive] single step which could be taken towards keeping Italy on the right side of the Iron Curtain.<sup>74</sup>

The interference of the British government and Labour Party in the affairs of the Italian socialist movement was also paralleled by the attempts by the Foreign Office to improve Italy's international role through a favourable settlement on the future of some of its former colonies and to help it solve its surplus population problem. The Foreign Office was unable to hold forth the prospect of colonial concessions in order to assuage Italian nationalistic feelings despite Bevin's accommodating attitude towards Italy's aspirations

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<sup>73</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 12-3-1948, memorandum by Crosthwaite, 21-2-48.

over Somaliland and parts of Eritrea.<sup>75</sup> Both the British and French governments had agreed that on the colonial issue, the less said the better, as neither government was prepared, at this stage, to contemplate the wholesale return of the ex-Italian colonies and because they feared that the Soviets could exploit this issue too.<sup>76</sup> The Americans were also concerned that the Europeans demonstrate openly that Italy was being treated on a basis of equality with the other Western European countries. For the State Department, one way to convey this was to invite Italy to be included in the Western Union as an original signatory. Both Britain and France resisted pressure from the Americans to incorporate Italy into the Brussels Treaty prior to the Italian election.<sup>77</sup> As far as Bevin was concerned, he had taken stock of the situation after the reactions of the Italian Left to his Western Union speech. These accused him and Britain of trying to entangle Italy with alliances that would turn it into a battleground if and when war broke out between East and West. He also took into account the reaction of the Italian government which proclaimed that it would not enter into any defensive alliance system which carried with it

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<sup>75</sup>. Ibid; CAB 128/12, CM12(48), 'Future of Italian Colonies', CP(48)43, 5-2-1948; FO 371/73155/Z634/93/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 27-1-1948; *ibid.*, Z1398/93/22, 17/2/1948, top secret, telegram, no. 301 Mallet to Bevin, 17-2-1948. On British policy towards the Italian colonies see Kelly, S.M.B., *Britain, the United States and the Question of the Italian Colonies, 1940-52*, PhD thesis, LSE, University of London, 1995. Mallet had recommended that the government ought to come out with a declaration on the colonial issue designed to show the Italian that Britain had always safeguarded Italian interests and with practical evidence that it was attempting to solve Italy's surplus population problem.

<sup>76</sup>. FO 371/73055/Z2559/273/72, 24-3-1948, minute by Roberts, 18-3-1948.

<sup>77</sup>. FO 371/73053/Z2411/273/72, 19-3-1948, minute by Sargent, addressed to Bevin, 5-3-1948; FO 371/73191/Z2545/637/22, 22-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 22-3-1948; FO 371/68067/AN1296/1195/45, 23-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3208, Kirkpatrick to Jebb, Washington, 20-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1315/1195/45, 25-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1430, Washington to FO, 24-3-1948; top secret, telegram, no. 3384, FO to Washington, 25-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1325/1195/45, 26-3-1948, telegram, no. 1461, Bevin to Inverchapel, 29-3-1948.



military obligations for as long as the military clauses of the Peace Treaty remained in place.<sup>78</sup>

The British were similarly incapable of offering any unilateral and quick solutions to Italy's surplus population problem. The Foreign Office toyed with the idea of solving both problems simultaneously by exploring the possibility of Italian involvement, along with the other African powers, in planning the development of African resources by offering Italy a seat on an African Council for the Development of Overseas Territories.<sup>79</sup> The notion of associating Italy with African colonial development was examined in some detail since any decisions on the issue could have impacted on Italy's demographic problems, and as Mallet had often maintained, it would be extremely helpful if the British government showed some practical evidence that it was sympathetic to Italy's manpower problems. Italy's imperial aggrandizement during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century had been closely associated with its attempts to solve its surplus population problem. In view of the size of the problem - nearly two million Italians had to be absorbed - Britain's contribution to its solution could be only a moderate one, but Bevin was eager to tackle the issue to the best of his ability. In fact, when he met Sforza, Bevin raised the matter of Italian manpower and he declared his interest in helping Italy solve this problem. He stated that Britain was trying to help by recruiting more Italians in Africa but that he was reserved about such efforts having a significant impact because of the enormity of the problem.<sup>80</sup> The Italian government too,

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<sup>78</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, p. 45-6 and 53-4; ACS, *verbale della riunione del Consiglio dei ministri del 28-1-1948*; FO 371/73193/Z2449/640/22, 22-3-1948, telegram, no. 54, Mallet to FO, 19-3-1948; Quartararo, R., *Italia e Stati Uniti: Gli Anni Difficili, 1945-52*, Rome, 1986, p. 258.

<sup>79</sup>. CAB 128/12, CM12(48), CP(48)43, 5-2-1948.

<sup>80</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2375/93/22, 19-3-48, minute by Crosthwaite, 12-3-1947.

was anxious to solve this problem and had lobbied Britain consistently. The Foreign Office saw the best solution as being the permanent settlement of Italians in Britain's African colonies as opposed to the allocation of temporary work on short term contracts. The Colonial Office disliked the idea intensely and jettisoned it, maintaining that indeed, the need for foreign labour of this kind in Africa was temporary. Their own objective was to train Africans to do these jobs and they sought to protect them from external competition. The Foreign Office pleaded with the Colonial Office to withdraw its opposition to the scheme but to no avail.<sup>81</sup> An alternative solution to the problem of surplus manpower was to use Italian labour in Europe. Thus, Britain could alleviate the problem by allowing Italian labourers to work in Britain and by limiting the preferential treatment given by the Home Office for DPs from Germany. The Foreign Office sought actively to influence the policies of the Home Office and the Allied Control Commission of Germany in their endeavours to assist the Italian government with its pressing demographic problems.<sup>82</sup>

The Foreign Office was also interested in finding a solution for Trieste that would be advantageous to Italy. Bevin had concluded as early as October 1947 that the implementation of the relevant clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty would lead to the absorption of the Free Territory by Yugoslavia and that the West had to avoid at all costs the appointment of a new Governor. He felt that the only solution was partition and the absorption of the Western Zone 'A', by

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<sup>81</sup>. Kent, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-9; CAB 129/24, CP(48)43, 4-2-1948; FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 12-3-1948, memorandum by Crosthwaite, 21-2-48

<sup>82</sup>. *Ibid.*; FO 371/73158/Z3043/93/22, 12-4-1948, minute by Brown, 8-4-1948; FO 371/73060/Z5543/273/72, 8-7-1948, top secret, minute, undated, unsigned.

Italy.<sup>83</sup> His opinions were crystallized by the fact that the Yugoslav Fourth Army had decided to celebrate the coming into force of the Italian Peace Treaty by staging a rather crude and unsuccessful attempt to occupy the Western administrated Zone 'A'.<sup>84</sup> He was worried however that the United States would obstruct a solution along these lines. Lord Inverchapel, the British Ambassador to Washington and Sir Alexander Cadogan, the British Ambassador to the UN, tried hard to convert the United States to its point of view and to join together to convince the UNSC to delay the election of a Governor for the Free Territory.<sup>85</sup> The aim was create 'an atmosphere in which the idea of partition [came] to be accepted as the only practicable solution'.<sup>86</sup> The United States, despite its determination to ensure that Trieste did not fall into the hands of Yugoslavia, was reluctant to take any such steps before the outcome of the Italian election was known, fearing that this would create an untimely and premature crisis. It was not until the end of January that the Washington Embassy was able to detect a mild interest for the British proposals in the State Department, when a non-committal Hickerson told J. Balfour, the Minister at the British Embassy in Washington that 'the ultimate solution [had to] be found in

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<sup>83</sup>. FO 371/67344/R14290/10/92, 27-10-1947, top secret, telegram, no. 11314, FO to Washington, 31-10-1947; FO 371/72484/R1474/44/70, 3-2-1948, minute by Warner, 8-1-1948.

<sup>84</sup>. FO 371/72482/R380/44/70, 9-1-1948, despatch, no. 1, 'Annual Report on Trieste, 1947' by W.J. Sullivan, Political Adviser, Trieste, 1-1-1948.

<sup>85</sup>. FO 371/67344/R14290/10/92, 27-10-1947, top secret, minutes by Bevin, undated, Warner, 24-10-1947, G.A. Wallinger, head of Southern Department, 16-10-1947 and Sargent, 21-10-1947; FO 371/72482/R139/44/70, 1-1-1948, minute by Sargent, 1-1-1948; *ibid.*, R506/44/70, 12-1-1948, top secret, memorandum, 2-1-1948; FO 371/72483/R710/44/70, 16-1-1948, secret, telegram, no. 631, FO to Washington, 17-1-1948; FO 371/72483/1398/44/70, 31-1-1948, secret, telegram, no. 433, Bevin to Sir Alexander Cadogan, British Ambassador to the United Nations, New York, 31-1-1948.

<sup>86</sup>. *Ibid.*

partition'.<sup>87</sup> In the meantime, Mallet aired British thinking and proposals on Trieste to De Gasperi and Sforza and both declared themselves in favour of partition, as long as it was accompanied by an Anglo-American guarantee.<sup>88</sup> In fact, Sforza liked the idea so much that he broached the issue with James Dunn, the American Ambassador to Italy, and suggested to him that it would be a helpful election booster if the American, British and French governments were to declare in favour of partition and the return of the Anglo-American Zone to Italy.<sup>89</sup>

The State Department, having absorbed Italian and British thinking on Trieste, came up with an incredible *volte face*. It approached the Foreign Office, proposing that the American, British and French governments must declare their favour of ceding the whole of the Free Territory to Italy and not just the Anglo-American zone. Its aim was to enhance the electoral support for the anti-communist bloc and it deemed that a sweeping declaration of this nature would have maximum effect as it would wrong-foot the PCI and it would show beyond any doubt that the West had no intention of withdrawing from Trieste.<sup>90</sup> Bevin was doubtful as to the efficacy of such a public declaration at this juncture. The essence of British policy lay in working 'quietly' and consistently towards partition without any public pronouncement of the idea. The Foreign Office also felt reluctant to promise the return of a sector over which it had no jurisdiction

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<sup>87</sup>. Ibid., R870/44/70, 20-1-1948, secret, telegram, no. 286, Washington to FO, 19-1-1948; FO 371/72512/R2340/2340/70, 19-2-1948, minute by Wallinger, 12-2-1948.

<sup>88</sup>. FO 371/72484/R1519/44/70, 4-2-1948, minute by Warner, 1-2-1948; FO 371/67344/R14290/10/92, top secret, telegram, no. 11314, FO to Washington, 31-10-1947; top secret, minute by Bevin, undated; top secret, minutes by Warner, 24-10-1947, Wallinger, 16-10-1948, Sargent, 21-10-1948.

<sup>89</sup>. FO 371/72486/R3265/44/70, 11-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 461, Ward to FO, 10-3-1948.

<sup>90</sup>. FO 371/72485/R3065/44/70, 8-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1080, Inverchapel to Bevin, 6-3-1948.

whatsoever and which was already in Yugoslav hands.<sup>91</sup> Eventually, the British government fell in behind the American proposal. This was because of the necessity of manipulating Italian public opinion to benefit the Christian Democrats and the desire to lessen the thunder of the Soviet declaration of their intention to support the return of the ex-Italian colonies to Italy and to forestall a similar Soviet declaration on Trieste as well. This would deprive the PCI of the chance to claim that a communist victory at the ballot-box would make the resolution of the Trieste question easier.<sup>92</sup> As G. A. Wallinger, head of the Southern Department, put it, the aim behind this decision was 'to win votes for the Christian Democrats and spike the Communist gun'.<sup>93</sup>

From the moment Bevin took the decision to support the American proposal he worked tirelessly to bring France on board as well. Georges Bidault, the French Foreign Minister, was apprehensive about the declaration as it was more or less tantamount to tearing up a section of a Peace Treaty that had just been ratified. He also felt, that the wording of the American draft was unnecessarily provocative and that it had not given enough prominence to France's role.<sup>94</sup> He was also worried that the timing of the declaration would overshadow his forthcoming visit to Turin to sign the Franco-Italian Customs Union agreement, which was to be the first visit to Italy by a member of a major Western

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<sup>91</sup>. FO 371/72486/R3265/44/70, 11-3-1948, undated minute by Bevin; *ibid.*, R3388/44/70, 15-3-1948, top secret, letter, Wallinger to Ashley-Clarke, 11-3-1948.

<sup>92</sup>. CAB 128/12, CM24(48), 22-3-1948.

<sup>93</sup>. FO 371/72486/R3071/44/70, 8-3-1948, minute by Wallinger, 1-3-1948; *ibid.*, R3388/44/70, 15-3-1948, top secret, letter, Wallinger to Ashley-Clarke, 11-3-1948.

<sup>94</sup>. FO 371/72486/R3508/44/70, 18-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 264, Harvey to FO, 17-3-1948; *ibid.*, R3576/44/70, 19-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 274, Harvey to FO, 18-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3114, FO to Washington, 18-3-1948, *ibid.*, R3723/44/70, 22-3-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 18-3-1948.

government since 1943. Bevin agreed to a small delay to the declaration despite American pressure to do the opposite.<sup>95</sup> The Tripartite Declaration on Trieste was made on 20 March 1948 and it proposed that the Peace Treaty with Italy should be modified by an additional protocol that would place the whole of the Free Territory under Italian sovereignty. Ostensibly, America, Britain and France claimed that their principal motivation for this proposal was the fact that up to now, arrangements had failed to provide for the proper administration of the area, namely the failure of the Four Powers to agree on a Governor for the area, and because they believed that this solution would 'meet the democratic aspirations of [its] inhabitants facilitating the re-establishment of peace and stability' in the region.<sup>96</sup>

The Tripartite Declaration on Trieste contributed greatly towards neutralizing any anti-Western sentiment Italian nationalists may have harboured after the Peace Treaty; it helped to consolidate the nationalists behind the DC and it put the PCI and Soviet Union in an extremely difficult position. Any sign of support from the PCI for such a solution to the Trieste problem would have helped it, but it would have simultaneously driven a wedge between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. This was something that Stalin was not prepared to countenance at this juncture. The Italian Government felt the Declaration to be an extremely important electoral asset to them.<sup>97</sup> De Gasperi himself, confided to Mallet later that he believed that the Declaration on Trieste had deprived the Communists

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<sup>95</sup>. FO 371/72486/R3712/44/70, 22-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 387, Bevin to Oliver Harvey, 17-3-1948; FO 371/73055/Z2559/273/72, 24-3-1948, minute by Roberts, 18-3-1948; FO 371/73173/Z1764/247/22, 2-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 982, Inverchapel to FO, 1-3-1948.

<sup>96</sup>. CAB 128/12, CM24(48), 22-3-1948.

<sup>97</sup>. Cacace, P., *Venti anni di politica estera italiana, 1943-1963*, Roma, 1986, p. 287; Valliani, L., *L' Italia di De Gasperi, 1945-1954*, Firenze, 1982, p. 113.

of a good electioneering issue.<sup>98</sup>

What had helped coalesce policy on Trieste and accelerate the frequency of intervention in Italian domestic affairs in the run up to the election had been the hysteria and foreboding that had gripped the West after the Czech Coup, which had occurred only two months before. Western circles drew the conclusion that similar tactics to those used in Prague could be employed in Italy too and that Italians would not even have the chance to cast their vote in the ballot box, despite the fact that any analogies with Prague were rendered invalid by the absence of any Red Army troops in Italy.<sup>99</sup> A major concern for Bevin was the fact the PCI, through the use of its dominant position in the Italian trade union movement, could organise industrial disturbances not only to sabotage the success of the Marshall Plan, but also to subvert the Italian government through factory Committees of Action and parallel the predicament of Czechoslovakia.<sup>100</sup> Thus, communist strength and activities within the CGIL were monitored closely. The Rome Embassy reported that the national Congress of the CGIL of July 1947 had demonstrated that the Communists had succeeded in winning most of the top posts including that of the Secretary General which was occupied by Di Vittorio. The PCI had scored 60% of the vote followed by Nenni's PSIUP with 25%, the DC with 12% and Saragat with a mere 2% of the vote. The PCI also controlled trade unions in key industrial city centres like Turin, Genoa and Taranto. It controlled 86 out of the 92

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<sup>98</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z2763/93/22, 1-4-1948, minute by Bevin, 24-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z2788/93/22, 2-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 578, Mallet to FO, 31-3-1948.

<sup>99</sup>. Bullock, *op. cit.*, p. 501; Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 121; FO 371/73069/Z2642/2307/22, 30-3-1948, top secret, minute by Roberts, 26-2-1948; FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 12-3-1948, memorandum for the Secretary of State drafted by Crosthwaite, 21-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z2053/93/22, 11-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 12-3-1948.

<sup>100</sup>. *Ibid.*, Z2117/93/22, 12-3-48, confidential, important, telegram, no. 582, Crosthwaite to Ward, 10-3-48.

Chambers of Labour and it held a virtual monopoly of power in the metallurgical industries. The Foreign Office Research Department, (FORD), similarly, pointed out that the PCI was benefiting from the hegemonic position it had assumed within Italian organized labour and that its superb organizational structure had ensured that its minority status did not deprive it from power and strength.<sup>101</sup>

This portrayal of Communist omnipotence gave a rather distorted picture of the actual strength of the PCI. It appeared to be so strong because it had been consistently successful in securing and maintaining influential posts within the trade union movement. Soviet actions were however difficult to explain to non-Communists, especially when Western Socialists had condemned them promptly. Furthermore, the ERP and its promises of prosperity made De Gasperi almost invincible. The DC had intensified its trade union activities and its collateral organisation, the Association of Catholic Workers, had seen its membership increase from 200,000 members in 1946 to nearly 1,000,000 by 1947. In contrast, PCI trade union membership appeared to be waning; it had fallen from 52% to 43%, during the same period according to the estimates of the British Embassy in Rome. The worrying trend identified by Mallet and Ward was that this fall in the popularity and support of the PCI was being picked up by Nenni's PSIUP. The Embassy advised that the only way to make good this drift to the PSIUP was to encourage disaffected PSIUP supporters to join the secessionists.<sup>102</sup> Margaret Carlyle, of the Italian Section of the Research Department of the Foreign Office (FORD), also identified the weakness of the

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<sup>101</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z2587/93/22, 25-3-48, FORD report on 'Communism in Italy', 24-3-48; *ibid.*, Z2827/93/22, 3-4-48, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 24-3-1948.

<sup>102</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2615/93/22, 15-3-48, confidential, telegram, no. 492, Ward to FO, 14-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z2455/93/22, 22-3-48, telegram, no. 522, Mallet to FO, 20-3-1948.



PCI and recommended that the condemnation of communism by the Labour Party and the Trade Unions would help enormously to 'cement Italian Socialist resistance' to it.<sup>103</sup>

Carlyle also proposed that De Gasperi should be made to understand that the only way to defeat communism for good was by embarking on a bold programme of reform even against the wishes of his wealthy supporters since further unfulfilled and undelivered promises would only play into the hands of Communists. The FORD had distinguished the following economic reasons to explain the PCI's appeal: high inflation since 1945, had led to a rapid rise in the cost of living; high unemployment exacerbated by a high birthrate - half a million children were born each year - and the exhaustion of lands to emigrate to in contrast to the situation in the early twentieth century; the desperate situation of the South coupled with illiteracy and finally, the maldistribution of wealth and the mutual cooperation of the PCI with the PSIUP.<sup>104</sup> Carlyle commented that the Southern voter attracted to the PCI was profiled as being poor, uneducated and politically naive, not a natural supporter of the PCI. She concluded that such a voter could be poached and persuaded to vote for the governing coalition provided that it came up with a programme of addressing the specific problems of the South. It all depended on the Government taking effective measures and making good of its promises<sup>105</sup> because, as Carlyle put it succinctly, 'the South has waited for over seventy years; the Communists are

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<sup>103</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z2587/93/22, 25-3-48, memorandum drafted by Carlyle, 23-3-1948.

<sup>104</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1674/93/22, 27-2-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 353, Mallet to FO, 24-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z1775/93/22, 2-3-1948, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott, 3-3-1948, Brown, 4-3-1948, Crosthwaite, 18-3-1948 and Carlyle, 19-3-1948.

prepared to see that it will wait no longer'.<sup>106</sup>

Bevin insisted that communist trade union activity still had to be monitored carefully and closely because his experience as a Union boss during the interwar years had convinced him that the Czech prototype could be re-enacted in an Italy which he regarded as being an 'immediate danger spot'.<sup>107</sup> His worries were not assuaged despite the Italian government decree of December 1947 which had banned the establishment and operation of political committees of action in factories and workshops and thus removed the prospect of PCI *coup d'état* Czech fashion.<sup>108</sup> He reiterated his concerns to the Italian Foreign Minister, who despite his alarm at the Czech coup and its timing, remained optimistic about the election result. In his opinion, the coup would have an adverse effect on the Italian electorate and he believed that many waverers would abandon the PSIUP and thus weaken Nenni's hold on it.<sup>109</sup> Sforza reassured Bevin that the Italian forces of law and order were in an excellent condition and capable of dealing with communist disturbances and that his government could rise up to any communist danger. Bevin found Sforza too optimistic for his liking in this instance and impressed upon him how important it was for the Italian government to stay put in the case of an emergency until help from the US and Britain was at hand.<sup>110</sup> Again, Sforza assured Bevin that his government had no intention of taking Communists back

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<sup>106</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z2587/93/22, 25-3-48, FORD memorandum drafted by Carlyle, 23-3-1948.

<sup>107</sup>. CAB 129/25, CP(48)72, top secret, memorandum, Bevin, 3-3-1948.

<sup>108</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2615/93/22, 15-3-48, confidential, telegram, no. 492, Ward to FO, 14-3-1948.

<sup>109</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1740/93/22, 2-3-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 386, Mallet to FO, 29-3-1948.

<sup>110</sup>. FO 371/73055/Z2559/273/72, 24-3-1948, minute, by Roberts, 18-3-1948.

into the government under any circumstances. He reiterated and, in a sense revealed to Bevin, the depth of American involvement in Italian security matters when he made open to him the fact that the Italian government had set up an 'impregnable fortress' in Rome. This was the operational centre from which the Italian government would co-ordinate operations in the event of a Communist electoral success. Finally, Bevin informed Sforza that he had arranged for Saragat and Lombardo to be invited to the next meeting of the Committee of International Socialist Conference (COMISCO), something that Sforza had felt confident would help prise votes away from the PSIUP and deliver them to the Socialist Unity Parties.<sup>111</sup>

The Czech coup made Bevin and the British Cabinet see the co-operation of the two leading parties of the Left in Italy in almost apocalyptic terms. Bevin believed that once the PCI had been elected it would marginalize any moderating influence PSIUP could exert.<sup>112</sup> His conclusion was that further and immediate steps had to be taken to strengthen the 'forces of democratic socialism' in Italy.<sup>113</sup> For Bevin, Nenni's decision to fight the campaign on a common ticket with the PCI would lead to 'the eventual elimination of socialism in Italy'.<sup>114</sup> He decided that the Labour Party ought to intervene even more dynamically in the elections. As a result, Morgan Phillips was instructed to board the same plane that was taking Healey to Rome.<sup>115</sup> They were both instructed to approach those PSIUP leaders who were still reeling from the

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<sup>111</sup>. FO 371/73199/Z2308/1392/22, 17-3-1948, minute by Roberts, 15-3-1948; top secret, letter, Bevin to Mallet, 15-3-1948.

<sup>112</sup>. CAB 129/25, top secret, CP(48)72, memorandum by Bevin, 3-3-1948.

<sup>113</sup>. CAB 128/12, top secret, CM19(48), 5-3-1948.

<sup>114</sup>. CAB 129/25, CP(48)72, 3-3-1948.

<sup>115</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., pp. 544-545.

overwhelming condemnation and isolation that they had experienced at the COMISCO. Their task was to find out if the latter were ready to sever their links with the PCI and alter their attitude and stance towards the Marshall Plan.<sup>116</sup> Phillips met Lelio Basso, the Secretary of the PSIUP, who underlined to him that the PSIUP was determined to continue its cooperation with the PCI, to which Phillips replied that for as long as the PSIUP was facilitating the Communists obtaining domination over Italy this made cooperation with the Labour Party impossible.<sup>117</sup> On their return to London, Phillips wrote to Saragat publicly endorsing him and Healey made his famous and hardhitting anti-communist broadcast on 10 April 1948. Both initiatives were received well and had a beneficial impact on the Italian social democratic vote.<sup>118</sup>

The Americans maintained their pressure on London to adopt a more interventionist policy. They discounted Bevin's very realistic observation that Britain had only a limited influence on Italian politics and that it was doing all it could. The State Department insisted that Britain could do a lot more to influence the outcome of the election. They stressed two areas on which Britain could exert direct influence capitalizing on the strong links the Labour Party had with the PSIUP and the Italian Trade Union movement overall. The Americans did not fail to vent their anxieties concerning the uncertainties of the Italian situation and that they had identified British attitudes towards postwar Italy as being a contributory factor.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z2449/640/22, 22-3-1948, telegram, no. 54, Mallet to FO, 19-3-1948.; *ibid.*, Z3041/640/22, 12-4-1948, telegram, no. 74, Mallet to FO, 3-4-1948.

<sup>117</sup>. FO 371/73056/Z2949/273/72, 8-4-1948, despatch, no. 274, Bevin to Mallet, 15-3-1948.

<sup>118</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z3505/640/22, 26-4-1948, savingram, no. 83, Mallet to Bevin, 23-4-1948.

<sup>119</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2069/93/22 13-3-48, secret, telegram, no. 1126, Inverchapel to Bevin, 10-3-48.

Very soon the British government found itself at odds with some of the American methods and plans for intervention and found it difficult to support them. The issues that created most tension were the handing over to Italy of all frozen German assets in Italy, further announcements on the issue of Trieste, revision of the military clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty and pressure on Greece to drop its reparation claims against Italy. On the first matter, London came under intense pressure from the Americans to agree to their proposal of announcing prior to the election that all frozen German assets would be released to the Italian government. The British government turned down this proposal for a number of reasons. First, it believed that it would have only limited appeal, because its timing was wrong and because such an announcement would have much greater impact as a reward after the election. Second, because it could antagonize the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer who had already started asking for equality of rights - *Gleichberechtigung*. Finally because Britain had not as yet decided how these assets should be best disposed of.<sup>120</sup> Bevin was also greatly angered when he realised that the United States was putting strong pressure on a rather shaky Greek government to drop its reparations claims against Italy in an effort to influence the Italian election result. He saw this as an 'absurd' and 'objectionable' attempt, which according to him it denoted that some people in the State Department were inclined to 'conduct foreign policy on New York electioneering lines'. His ire was excited not only by the fact that Britain had not been consulted and that he had heard of this initiative from K. Tsaldaris, the Greek Foreign Minister, but also because he was worried that the Truman Administration in its attempt to clinch the Italian election result was adopting a recklessly one-sided policy that could have severe implications for the precarious pro-Western Greek government and also because it would impair

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<sup>120</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z3043/93/22, 12-4-1948, minute by Brown, 8-4-1948.

Italy's relations with its neighbours in the long run.<sup>121</sup>

The issue on which Bevin proved to be totally intransigent, despite strong pressure from Dunn and the Italian government, was that of the revision of the military clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty in order to manipulate Italian public opinion prior to the election. The reason for this was not due to any vengeful feelings towards Italy but to caution and pragmatism. The Peace Treaty had been a thorn in the side of the Italian government, constantly generating anti-Western feelings amongst nationalist circles in Italy. The Italian government decided to capitalise on Western concerns about the security of Italy in the run up to the election by bringing the issue once again to the fore. In addition, it had assessed that a revision would increase its popularity in exactly the same way as the Tripartite Declaration on Trieste had done. Dunn took Italian concerns seriously and attempted to sell the idea of a revision to his government by asking it to issue a declaration in favour of, at least a partial revision, which would remove the limitations to Italy's sovereignty imposed by the military clauses of the Treaty.<sup>122</sup> Mallet too, believed that steps to revise the Treaty would be received positively by all sections of Italian public opinion as it 'would flatter the pride of many Italians inside and outside the armed forces'.<sup>123</sup>

The Foreign Office had accepted the notion that eventually these provisions

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<sup>121</sup>. FO 73154/Z3014/3014/22, 12-4-1948, minute by Bevin, undated; *ibid.*, Z3171/3014/22, 15-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 37, Sir C. J. Norton, the British Ambassador to Greece, to FO, 14-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3339/3014/22, 20-4-1948, confidential, letter, Sargent to Inverchapel, 17-4-1948; letter, D.P. Reilly, Counsellor at the British Embassy in Athens to Wallinger, 12-4-1948.

<sup>122</sup>. FO 371/73214/Z2935/2935/22, 7-4-1948, secret, telegram, no.624, Mallet to FO, 7-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z2991/2935/22, 9-4-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 10-4-1948.

<sup>123</sup>. *Ibid.*, Z2958/2935/22, 8-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 625, Mallet to FO, 7-4-1948.

would either have to be revised or fall into disuse. In fact, the British government already was willingly turning a blind eye towards minor violations such as the arming of *Sicurezza Pubblica*, so long as it improved the internal security situation of Italy.<sup>124</sup> What the Foreign Office, however, was determined to avoid, was bringing this issue to the fore at such a sensitive moment in the political life of Italy and giving the PSIUP/PCI ticket ammunition for their propagandists to back their claim with proof that the West was trying to 'drag Italy' into war against the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the Foreign Office felt that such a revision so soon after the signing and the ratification of the Treaty was unwise. It would deprive the West of the moral high ground to continue its accusations against the Soviet Union that the latter had 'connived and instigated' the violation of major provisions of the Balkan Peace Treaties. The State Department accepted albeit reluctantly, the validity of these arguments and decided that the time was not ripe for issuing a declaration committing the US to the revision of the Peace Treaty along the lines proposed by Dunn. The issue of revision was shelved for a more propitious moment.<sup>125</sup>

One area of the Peace Treaty on which the British government was willing to compromise was on the issue of the punishment of Italian war criminals. The British government felt that this was the time to settle the matter once and for all. It proposed that all the Western governments waive their rights, under the Peace Treaty, to demand the surrender of Italian citizens who were still

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<sup>124</sup>. FO 371/73172/Z1336/167/22, 17-2-1948, secret, despatch, no. 58, Mallet to Bevin, 6-2-1948; minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 19-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z4162/167/22, 18-5-1948, minute by Brown, 18-5-1948; confidential, memorandum by Cope, second secretary, Rome, 'Treaty of Peace with Italy', 15-6-1948; *ibid.*, Z9649/167/22, 26-11-1948, secret, despatch, no. 382, Mallet to McNeil, 19-11-1948; FO 371/73234/Z9515/9515/22, 22-11-1948, secret, despatch, no. 380, Mallet to McNeil, 16-11-1948.

<sup>125</sup>. FO 371/73214/Z2991/2935/22, 9-4-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 10-4-1948, endorsed by Bevin on the same day; immediate, telegram, no. 1694, Inverchapel to FO, 8-4-1948, *ibid.*, Z3946/2935/22, 10-5-1948, confidential, letter, Inverchapel to Sargent, 29-4-1948.

standing accused of having perpetrated war crimes against UN nationals in exchange for a firm Italian undertaking to bring these persons to trial. The formulation of this proposal was a direct reaction to Sforza's first electoral speech in Naples in January 1948, in which he proclaimed that Italy would do its utmost to punish those 'who had committed acts contrary to humanity and to the noblest traditions of the Italian character' whilst also carefully hinting that his government would try to avoid any surrender of Italian citizens to face trial in foreign courts.<sup>126</sup> The issue of Italian war crimes was ripe for manipulation because it could be used to flatter Italian nationalistic sentiments, and could also generate Yugoslav hostility which would result in Communist diffidence and Soviet awkwardness and it might well drive a wedge between the PCI and some of its nationalistic supporters. Such dynamics injected a degree of urgency in British attempts to deal with the issue. The Foreign Office convinced the Judge Advocate General's Office to drop any objections to its proposal and tried to bring France on board too.<sup>127</sup> The proposal was received coolly by the French because of the adverse impact it might have on their domestic politics and because they doubted its effectiveness. In any case, as far as Bidault was concerned, France had gone out of its way to help De Gasperi by returning to Italy territories which, under the Treaty, had been granted to it through by being party to the Tripartite Declaration, by signing the Franco-Italian Customs Union agreement and finally by upgrading its Embassy staff in Rome.<sup>128</sup> To the great relief of the Italian government the British government brushed aside French

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<sup>126</sup>. FO 371/73180/Z1836/317/22, 28-2-1948, minute by Brown, 28-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z1625/317/22, 12-2-1948, letter, Rome to War Crimes Section, 25-2-1948; FO 371/73181/Z2755/317/22, 1-4-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 10-4-1948; FO 371/73172/Z4162/167/22, 18-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 157, Mallet to Bevin, 12-5-1948.

<sup>127</sup>. FO 371/73180/Z1836/317/22, 28-2-1948, confidential, letter, Shapcott, JAG's Office, to Brown, 10-3-1948; confidential, telegram, no. 714, Bevin to Harvey, 15-3-1948.

<sup>128</sup>. FO 371/73055/Z2559/273/72, 24-3-1948, minute by Roberts, 17-3-1948.



concerns, announcing that they were prepared to go ahead alone<sup>129</sup> and communicated their decision to pass the responsibility of its remaining war crimes trials to the Italian courts.<sup>130</sup> In fact, the Americans had made the same decision as well and Britain did not have to act unilaterally.<sup>131</sup> These actions gave a further boost to the electoral prospects of the anti-communist ticket literally on the eve of the election in Italy.

The adoption of a policy that pledged the support of a British Labour government to an overtly conservative party was not entirely free of problems for Bevin or others in the British government. What continued to niggle and frustrate the British government even more was the apparent inability or even unwillingness of the Italian government to improve the condition of the South and introduce effective land reform. This inaction annoyed the British because it exposed the Labour government to charges and taunts that it was supporting a reactionary regime and because there was the likelihood that it increased the appeal of communism. The latter issue was of immediate concern because the problem of the South had emerged as the prominent one in the pre-election period.<sup>132</sup> The British Embassy reported from Rome that the Communist Party had made inroads in the South and that there were indications that it was overcoming traditional Southern conservatism through promises of better

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<sup>129</sup>. FO 371/73180/Z2464/317/22, 22-3-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 304, H. Ashley-Clarke, Minister, British Embassy Paris, to FO, 22-3-1948; FO 371/73181/Z27755/317/22, 1-4-1948, telegram, no. 360, Harvey to Bevin, 1-4-1948; confidential, telegram, no. 1078, Bevin to Harvey, 10-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z4113/317/22, 17-5-1948, letter, French Embassy in London to FO, 14-5-1948.

<sup>130</sup>. *Ibid.*, Z3535/317/22, 27-4-1948, letter, Mallet to Sforza, 16-4-1948; FO 371/73158/Z3043/3/22, 12-4-1948, memorandum, Brown, 8-4-1948, endorsed by Kirkpatrick, Strang and Bevin, 8-4-1948 *ibid.*, Z4163/317/22, 18-5-1948, despatch, no. 158, Mallet to FO, 14-5-1948.

<sup>131</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup>. CAB 128/12, CM27(48), 8-4-1948.

days ahead and by highlighting the indifference of the government to the plight of the *Mezzogiorno*.

Bevin complained that he felt 'handicapped' every time he proposed more help for Italy. This was by virtue of the fact that he was receiving a plethora of complaints on the failure of the Italian government to enact reform and to improve the condition of the Italian South. He felt that such a situation was contrary to the principles 'of a social democratic country like Britain' and that he had been left open to accusations that he 'was defending an Italian government with reactionary leanings'.<sup>133</sup> His view was that the Italian government ought to improve the image it projected abroad by at last embarking on social and agricultural reform.<sup>134</sup> Bevin instructed Mallet to convey his displeasure to the Italians in no uncertain terms.<sup>135</sup> When Mallet raised the issue with De Gasperi and Sforza, their reaction was reticent, noncommittal and far from encouraging. Both men believed that it was an issue that could wait as both were fearful of alienating their natural supporters. They maintained that this was a long-term problem which required huge capital investments.<sup>136</sup> The British were unable to influence the Christian Democrats to take the road to social reform because of the entrenched position held by the large landowners in the party. Thus, the Italian government was merely storing up problems which would eventually destabilize the Italian State in the 1960s and the 1970s. Mallet attempted to mollify Bevin by reminding him that De Gasperi's government was a coalition which represented various political

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<sup>133</sup>. FO 800/471/ITALY, confidential, telegram, no. 728, Bevin to Mallet, 23-3-1948; FO 371/73159/Z3102/93/22, 13-4-1948, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott, 14-3-1948, Brown, 16-4-1948, Carlyle, 29-4-1948.

<sup>134</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>135</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3102/93/22, 13-4-48, confidential, telegram, no. 71, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948; FO 371/73158/Z2896/93/22, 6-4-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 591, Mallet to Bevin, 2-4-1948.

<sup>136</sup>. Ibid., minute by Brown, 31-3-1948.

interests and colours, for example, Saragat's Socialists and Pacciardi's and Sforza's Republicans and that these two parties along with the Liberal Minister Einaudi had just published plans for social and land reform especially targeted at the underprivileged and backward South.<sup>137</sup>

In the realms of cultural diplomacy and propaganda, Britain had continued to keep a high profile in Italy by peddling the notion that the British way to socialism was the only viable and democratic alternative to the totalitarian Soviet model. At the Biennale exhibition of 1947, the British pavilion was one of the most impressive, adorned as it was with Turner's paintings. The exhibition was co-ordinated and organised by the British Council. The Western Department was particularly pleased with the reception Italians had given to the exhibition. Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, the Superintending Under-Secretary of the Western Department and Christopher Warner recommended that it should be moved to Rome for 1948.<sup>138</sup> The newly founded Information Research Department (IRD) cut its teeth with its campaign against Communism and the Soviet Union by mounting its first operations of 'white' and 'black propaganda' in Italy, much to the distress of Mallet who did not want his Embassy to be used for its activities for fear of being compromised and because he believed that it would not be able to add anything to the procedures he had already established to deal with issues of publicity.<sup>139</sup> His concerns were brushed aside

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<sup>137</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3102/93/22, 13-4-48, confidential, telegram, no. 71, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948.

<sup>138</sup>. FO 371/73162/Z5132/93/22, 24-6-1948, restricted, letter, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 2-7-1948.

<sup>139</sup>. FO 1110/1/PR24/9/3, 2-3-1948, secret, despatch, no. 81, Mallet to Bevin, 24-2-1948; secret, letter, Warner to Mallet, 25-3-1948; *ibid.*, P138/138/3, 23-2-1948, secret, telegram, no. 489, Warner to Mallet, 2-3-1948; top secret, letter, Warner to Mallet, 24-2-1948; *ibid.*, PR25/9/3, 2-3-1948, minute by M.J.R. Talbot, Northern Department, 3-3-1948; FO 1110/5/PR196/1/9/3, 13-4-1948, confidential, letter, Warner to Balfour, 12-4-1948; secret, Annex, 12-4-1948.

and he was instructed to implement the new information policy directive immediately. In fact, Italy had been earmarked as the first priority of the new organization and all its initial material was prepared with Italy in mind. The main work of the IRD was carried out in the planting of anti-communist material with the Italian Press and helping Italian officials and politicians with their anti-communist activities to discredit their opponents and thereby to neutralize Soviet propaganda, for instance in the case of the ex-Italian colonies. The only proviso was that it should 'avoid incitement to subversive activities'.<sup>140</sup>

During the spring of 1948, the internal security situation in Italy had suddenly deteriorated because of the heavy handed actions of De Gasperi and Scelba. On 9 and 10 March, the already tense political climate in Italy was exacerbated by a series of arrests of prominent communists in Puglia on charges connected with the anti-ERP general strike of November 1947. *L'Unità* condemned the actions of the security forces immediately and denounced the government for openly violating the 'electoral truce'. The whole exercise was described as a 'punitive expedition' by De Gasperi, who was determined to win the elections at all costs. Togliatti also made threatening noises by intimating that he was contemplating denouncing the truce altogether. Such measures created feelings of uncertainty and generated the impression that the situation in Italy was more volatile than it really was. This coupled with the alarm caused by the Czech coup, increased further existing Western fears of the state of the public order in Italy in the run up to the election.<sup>141</sup>

Such fears were reinforced by the fact that the pre-election period had seen an

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<sup>140</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>141</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2223/93/22, 15-3-1948, telegram, no. 47, Rome to FO, 12-3-1948; *L'Unità*, article, 10-3-1948.

increase in border incidents between Italy and Yugoslavia.<sup>142</sup> Scare-mongering and irresponsible articles appeared sporadically in the British Press. Some of these contained wild and, more often than not, unsubstantiated claims that 'shock troops' and arms were being smuggled into Italy from Yugoslavia.<sup>143</sup> A gloomy article in *The Times* predicted that the PCI had a fair chance of winning the elections.<sup>144</sup> Such reports were not always taken at face value by the Foreign Office. The estimation of the Southern Department was that the Yugoslavs were showing 'apprehension' at being involved in such adventures and that the Soviet Union would not allow the Yugoslavs to take any action that might risk direct confrontation with Britain or the US at this time.<sup>145</sup> Nevertheless such reports and articles contributed to the general uneasiness arising from an already tense situation.

Fears diminished slightly, when London received reports from the British Legation to the Holy See which detailed the unwavering and unflagging involvement of the Italian clergy on the side of the anti-communist forces in the election. The Foreign Office, however, looked upon the intervention of the Vatican with a degree of trepidation and uncertainty. Although the level of Vatican involvement disconcerted many in the Foreign Office who recognized that it could alienate anti-communist secular circles, it moved nevertheless to endorse it. Any doubts were dispelled by the hope that the clergy could shore

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<sup>142</sup>. FO 371/72619/R3038/3038/92, 8-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 423, Mallet to FO, 6-3-1948; *ibid.*, R5302/3083/92, 29-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 742, Mallet to FO, 28-4-1948.

<sup>143</sup>. *Ibid.*, R4520/3038/92, 12-4-1948, telegram, no. 4520, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948; FO 371/73157/Z2222/93/22, 15-3-48, *The Sunday Chronicle*, article, by Cedric Slater, 7-3-48.

<sup>144</sup>. *The Times*, 12-2-1948; FO 371/73191/Z2726/637/22, 31-3-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 30-3-1948.

<sup>145</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2342/93/22, 18-3-48, top secret, telegram, no. 240, Peake to FO, 16-3-48; FO 371/72619/R4617/3038/92, 14-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 349, Peake to FO, 12-4-1948.

up support for the Christian Democrats and away from the Communists and the Socialists.<sup>146</sup> London watched with astonishment at the militant stance adopted by the Vatican and its collateral organizations such as Catholic Action. The Vatican had instructed the clergy to impress on devout Catholics the message that abstentionism was not an option for the faithful during this election and that their vote was to be given only to those who could and were willing to offer guarantees of safeguarding 'the rights of God, religion, family and society in accordance with the laws of God and of Christian morality'.<sup>147</sup> Most dramatically, the clergy was also instructed to refuse to offer absolution and the other sacraments to Communists.<sup>148</sup> The potential of such Church involvement on the voting intentions of an electorate made up of 99.6% practising Roman Catholics was appreciated immediately. The Foreign Office recognised that influence of the Pope and the Cardinals could galvanize the electorate, especially the traditionally politically apathetic Italian women, into voting for the Christian Democrats rather than abstaining.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, this foray of the clergy from concern for the metaphysical well-being to concern for the political well-being of their flock helped to thwart the main premise on which Togliatti had based his electoral campaign, namely that a person could cast a

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<sup>146</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z3044/93/22, 12-4-1948, minutes by Brown, 10-4-1948 and Crosthwaite, 16-4-1948.

<sup>147</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2272/93/22, 17-3-48, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott, 18-3-48 and Brown, 20-3-48; despatch, no. 43, J.V.T.W.T. Perowne, the British Ambassador to the Holy See, to Bevin, 11-3-48; *ibid.*, Z3044, 12-4-1948, despatch, no. 59, Perowne to Bevin, 9-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z2468/93/22, 22-3-1948, despatch, no. 43, Annex, Perowne to Bevin, 22-3-1948.

<sup>148</sup>. Ginsborg, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-7.

<sup>149</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2272/93/22, 17-3-48, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott, 18-3-48 and Brown, 20-3-48; despatch, no. 43, Perowne to Bevin, 11-3-48; *ibid.*, Z2468/93/22, 22-3-48, despatch, no. 50, Perowne to Bevin, 19-3-1948; FO 371/73155/Z148/93/22, 7-1-48, despatch, no. 176, Perowne to Bevin, 31-12-1947.

vote for the Communists and still remain a good and devout Catholic.<sup>150</sup>

From late March onwards, it was clear that the DC would emerge victorious in the electoral arena and that American and British intervention had indeed succeeded in curbing the popularity of the PCI/PSIUP ticket. Bidault, on his return from Turin, intimated to Sir Oliver Harvey, the British Ambassador to France that the Tripartite Declaration on Trieste had 'taken the wind out of the sails of the Communists'.<sup>151</sup> Intelligence reports revealed that the PCI and the PSIUP had all but lost all their support in the South and that the DC and the Saragat Socialists had absorbed it.<sup>152</sup> Even more encouragingly, there were reports that the Saragat and Lombardo factions were growing in popularity, a development the Italian government attributed directly to the support they had received from the British Labour Party and the TUC.<sup>153</sup> When Bevin met Sforza at Bidault's reception in Paris on 16 April 1948, the latter confirmed he was optimistic about the election and that his main concern was that too many reactionaries would be elected on the anti-communist ticket, a niggling concern for Bevin too.<sup>154</sup> Sforza paid tribute to Bevin for the activities of the Labour Party and in particular, to the endeavours of Healey and his impressive broadcast, which in his opinion, had had a profound impact on the Italian electorate.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>150</sup>. Ginsborg, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-7, Miller, 'Taking Off the Gloves', p. 44; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, p. 753.

<sup>151</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z2597/93/22, 26-3-48, secret, telegram, no. 339, Harvey to FO, 25-3-48.

<sup>152</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3216/93/22, 16-4-1948, minute by Pigott, 12-4-1948.

<sup>153</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3246/93/22, 17-4-1948, minutes by Sargent, 14-4-1948 and Crosthwaite, 16-4-1948.

<sup>154</sup>. FO 371/73159/3370/93/22, 21-4-1948, minute by Roberts, 17-4-1948.

<sup>155</sup>. *Ibid.*

However, new kinds of anxieties were to come to the fore. These concentrated around the possible reaction of the Communists to the election result and the concern that the PCI would try to overturn an unfavourable result through means of direct action. As the election date drew closer these fears grew among *Democrazia Cristiana* (DC), American and British circles. There was also a concomitant fear that the police forces would not be able to deal effectively with such an eventuality as their men would be dispersed all over the country guarding polling booths. Contingency plans were considered to have the Italian Army on stand-by to deal with any threat. The American government decided that a £10m consignment of equipment ought to be delivered immediately to be used, if the need arose, during the critical post-election period.<sup>156</sup> The British government was informed that the main thrust of US policy in assisting the DC, aimed at ensuring that Italy would have enough supplies and equipment to cope with any communist-inspired disorders. At the core of the American policy lay the intention of strengthening the Italian security forces to such a level as to enable them to fight their own battles against communist agitation. If this meant that peace treaty limits had to be violated then the US was prepared to do so. What was paramount was to ensure that US troops should not be involved in military combat in Italy.<sup>157</sup>

Scelba, the Minister of the Interior, confirmed that the latest opinion polls had forecast a comfortable victory for the DC and its allies but he intimated to Victor Mallet that he was concerned about the post electoral situation and he

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<sup>156</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1359/93/22, 17-4-48, personal, secret, letter, 12-2-1948; FO 371/73158/Z2976/93/22, 9-4-48, Washington to Western Department, FO, 30-3-48; FO 371/73158/Z3018/93/22, 12-4-48, secret, telegram, no. 650, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948.

<sup>157</sup>. Ibid., Z2860/93/22, 5-4-48, minute by Crosthwaite, 9-4-48; top secret, letter, no. 627, Inverchapel to Bevin, 1-4-48.



requested assistance.<sup>158</sup> Scelba's words carried much weight with the British. Bevin liked him and regarded him as an able and energetic man. Scelba, ominously noted, that this could be the only way to stop the Russians swallowing up Europe piecemeal and he went on to highlight the weaknesses of the *Carabinieri* as a result of the limitations imposed by the Peace Treaty. He told Mallet that the Allied Powers had the moral obligation to ensure that Italy was able to enforce article 17 which provided for the prevention of the resurgence, on Italian territory, of organizations 'whose aim [was] to deprive the people of their democratic rights'.<sup>159</sup> Scelba's concerns were deeply shared by many in the British government. Intelligence reports also confirmed fears that trouble was expected to erupt around 19 and 20 April 1948.<sup>160</sup> W. H. Braine, the Labour *Attaché* at the British Embassy in Rome, verified Scelba's concerns when he disclosed that intelligence he had gathered suggested that the Communists could hold an effective general strike despite the presence of a strong Association of Catholic Italian Workers (ACLI) element.<sup>161</sup>

Mallet saw Scelba's request for assistance as being motivated not simply by fears of political disruption in the critical post-election period but also by the Italian government's desire to capitalize on Anglo-American concerns over the election and to induce the latter two governments to commit themselves to the

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<sup>158</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3267/93/22, 19-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 692, Mallet to FO, 17-4-1948.

<sup>159</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z3018/93/22, 12-4-1948, telegram, no. 650, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948, FO 371/73156/Z1359/93/22, 17-2-48, secret, letter, Mallet to Kirkpatrick, 12-2-1948.

<sup>160</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3216/93/22, 16-4-1948, minute, Pemberton-Pigott, 12-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3301/93/22, 19-4-1948, minute by G.W. Furlonge, head of the Commonwealth Relations Department of the FO, 15-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3159/93/22, 16-4-48, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 12-4-48.

<sup>161</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3265/93/22, 19-4-1948, telegram, no. 675, Mallet to FO, 15-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3266/93/22, 19-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 687, Mallet to FO, 16-4-1948.

revision of the military clauses of the Peace Treaty. Thus, Mallet stressed that whilst the British government would do all it could to help the Italian government, the best way to sap the power of the Communist thrust was for the government to indulge in some self-help by announcing a major programme of social, agrarian and economic reform. This, he said, would help with British public opinion and would make it easier for the British government to support the DC. Prominent members of the Italian government could then go on to give interviews to British correspondents which would counteract the impression that the DC was the party of just clerical and reactionary forces.<sup>162</sup>

Scelba was unmoved by Mallet's arguments and entreaties and he stated forcefully that the only solution to communist insurrection was for Britain and the US to show that they would be prepared to use force. He proposed that the British and American fleets commence patrols in the Adriatic after 19 April. Scelba's prognostications were overly exaggerated and unduly pessimistic. Nevertheless, London was not prepared to discount them all willy-nilly. There were discussions within the different Departments of the Foreign Office to assess the danger and decide on the nature and adoption of the measures to deal with it. The Russia Committee was extremely alarmed by Scelba's warnings and Sargent was at his most pessimistic. Even when everyone else had arrived at the conclusion that Italy would be voting overwhelmingly for a Christian Democratic Government, he was still not convinced. His thinking was greatly influenced by the Greek Civil War and by the recent events in Czechoslovakia. He still feared a communist victory at the ballot box or, in case of their electoral failure, the possibility of a communist march on Rome, banditry, unrest and strikes. He advised that 'it was high time for a directive to

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<sup>162</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1359/93/22, 17-2-48, secret, letter, Mallet to Kirkpatrick, 12-2-1948

be prepared for issue to the naval and military commanders on the spot'.<sup>163</sup> Sargent and Sir William G. Hayter, the Superintending Under-Secretary of the Services Liaison Department of the Foreign Office and a member of the Russia Committee, recommended that a Royal Navy Task Force ought to call at Italian ports prior to and during the election with the twin aims of impressing the Italian Government with the Royal Navy's continued military strength and influencing the election favourably.<sup>164</sup> The State Department also favoured strong action and proposed that it would be better if ships were sent as a deterrent as soon as the elections were over under the pretext of a goodwill visit and before any trouble erupted. Hayter supported by Sargent, registered his support for the American proposal. The result was that the Ministry of Defence and the Chiefs of Staff Committee approved plans for a number of Royal Navy ships to be placed on stand-by to be ready to sail with American ships to Italian and Sicilian ports if disturbances broke out.<sup>165</sup>

The Western Department considered such plans to be a misguided idea. Kirkpatrick submitted that such a move would be provocative. He concluded that the best line of action would be for De Gasperi to be told that it was up to the Italian government to suppress any disturbances and if practical and moral support was needed then the British and the American governments would be

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<sup>163</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3355/93/22, 20-4-1948, top secret, memorandum drafted by Sargent, 13-3-1948.

<sup>164</sup>. Ibid., minutes by Hayter and Sargent, 15-4-1948; FO 371/73195B/Z1834/730/22, 4-3-1948, minutes by Crosthwaite, 4-3-1948 and Brown, 1-3-1948; secret, telegram, no. 508, FO to Rome, 2-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z1609/730/22, 26-2-1948, letter by Dodds (Military Branch), Admiralty, to Brown, 21-2-1948.

<sup>165</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3145/93/22, 14-1-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1758, Washington to FO, 13-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3146/93/22, 14-4-1948, memorandum, drafted by Crosthwaite, 14-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3355/93/22, 20-4-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 15-4-1948.

prepared to consider sending ships to forestall any trouble.<sup>166</sup> The American and British Ambassadors in Rome were also of the opinion that naval visits to Italian ports were undesirable and unnecessary and that it would reflect badly on the Western powers to have ships in an exposed and compromising position. It would lay the British and American governments open to criticism and charges of foul play. It would also be futile because ships could take no meaningful action in the case of disturbances ashore since the possibility of bombardment of Italian cities was out of the question. Finally, the Ambassadors felt that any naval activity would renew the January controversy and would give support to communist claims that the De Gasperi government was too weak to stand on its own and that it was totally dependent on outside support.<sup>167</sup>

Bevin preferred to follow Mallet's and Kirkpatrick's measured analysis and advice and these extreme measures were not adopted.<sup>168</sup> Nevertheless, by 15 April, the British government was sufficiently concerned to suggest to the State Department that it would be ready to declare jointly with the Americans and assure the Italian government that it would be prepared to give material and moral assistance to the Italian forces in the event they could not cope with the situation. The State Department however, concluded that such an assurance went too far and that it could prove counterproductive. In the end, despite the heightened concerns and fears, both the American and British governments were not prepared, at this time, to consider any other measures apart from fleet

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<sup>166</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3146/93/22, 14-4-1948, memorandum, 'Trouble in Italy', drafted by Crosthwaite, 14-4-1948; minute by Crosthwaite, 14-4-1948.

<sup>167</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3289/93/22, 19-4-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 691, Mallet to FO, 17-4-1948; FO 371/73195B/Z1955/730/22, 7-3-1948 secret, telegram, no. 424, Mallet to FO, 5-3-1948.

<sup>168</sup>. Ibid., minute by Brown, 9-3-1948.

patrols in the Adriatic.<sup>169</sup> They also decided that the idea of issuing a declaration proclaiming that they would not remain indifferent if violent means were employed to overturn the people's verdict was superfluous and pointless since this possible eventuality had been covered by Truman's statement at the time of the withdrawal of the US forces from Italy.<sup>170</sup> Ultimately, it was decided that it was up to the Italians to fight their own battles against the Communists and it was up to the West to ensure that they were adequately equipped to do so successfully. The shared conclusion was also that the Italian President had to be compelled into not entrusting the formation of a government to the PCI/PSIUP bloc or, indeed, to anyone who would be prepared to include these Parties in a governing coalition. Thus, the two governments instructed Mallet and Dunn to convey to De Gasperi their confidence in the ability of the Italian forces to maintain law and order in the post-election period. They also communicated to the Italian government their willingness to support it 'in any way practical and appropriate should it find it necessary to call upon them for further assistance.'<sup>171</sup>

One of the most remarkable characteristics of the pre-election period was that Western intervention was based on imaginary Soviet actions and plots against Italy when in fact there was precious little evidence that the Soviets were particularly concerned about the fate of the PCI. The Soviet Union remained resigned to a Christian Democratic victory because it had no desire to provoke

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<sup>169</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3289/93/22, 19-4-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 691, Mallet to FO, 17-4-1948.

<sup>170</sup>. FO 371/73195B/Z1955/730/22, 7-3-1948 secret, telegram, no. 424, Mallet to FO, 5-3-1948; FO 371/73159/Z3228/93/22, 16-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1819, Inverchapel to Bevin, 15-4-1948.

<sup>171</sup>. FO 371/73160/Z3454/93/22, 24-4-1948, minute by Brown, 24-4-1948; FO 371/73161/Z3783/93/22, 4-5-1948, telegram, no. 97, Mallet to Bevin, 4-5-1948, record of meeting between Mallet and De Gasperi on 1-5-1948.

a frontal confrontation with the West over Italy at a time when its priority was the consolidation of Eastern Europe. If anything, Soviet conduct in the run up to the election damaged the electoral prospects of the PCI and its allies. The Czech coup which occurred only two months prior to the election scared and alienated potential voters of the PCI/PSIUP ticket.<sup>172</sup> On the Trieste issue, the Soviets failed to elaborate an attractive alternative initiative to woo Italian public opinion. They procrastinated for a long while only to come up with a mere denunciation of the West's failure to consult with the USSR prior to the announcement of the Trieste Declaration.<sup>173</sup> On the eve of the elections, the Soviets created a rift in their relations with Italy when they attempted to link the negotiations for the replacement of the 1924 commercial accord with the thorny issue of reparations.<sup>174</sup> *Palazzo Chigi* was provoked into despatching a resentful note to the Soviets in which Sforza explained forcefully that, at this stage, Italy could not do this because it had been accepted and agreed that the country could not pay reparations for the next two years.<sup>175</sup> The Soviet decision to veto Italy's entry to the UNO for the third time created much negative feeling in Italy and its timing, just eight days prior to the election, was unproductive. The issue of the Italian membership had come up before the Security Council on 10 April and the Soviets had objected to Italian admission on legalistic technicalities.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup>. Cacace, op. cit., p. 287; Gambino, op. cit., p. 499.

<sup>173</sup>. Cacace, op. cit., p. 288.

<sup>174</sup>. Gambino, op. cit., p. 499; Valliani, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>175</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>176</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z3503/640/22, 26-4-1948, savingram, no. 83, Mallet to Bevin, 23-4-1948; FO 371/71650/N5036/31/38, 29-4-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 811, FO to Moscow, 26-4-1948; *ibid.*, N5283/31/38, *Monthly Review of Soviet Tactics*, item 2, Italy, drafted by Brown, 5-5-1948. The Soviets objected to Italian admission on the legalistic grounds that the Italian case could not be assessed in isolation of the cases of the other co-belligerents.

All the Soviets were prepared to do in the way of public initiatives to help their protégés in the forthcoming election was to announce that they were in favour of Italy's claims to gain trusteeship over its erstwhile colonies. This constituted a blatant attempt on the part of the Soviet Union to drive a wedge between Italy and the West and to induce Britain to jettison any similar idea and thereby putting the Soviet Union in the position of being the sole champions of Italian aspirations. Such attempts however, were undermined by the Soviets' unwillingness to make any material concessions to Italy at all and to follow the example of the US and the British in renouncing their share of the Italian Fleet.<sup>177</sup> Bevin capitalised further on the positive effect for the West that this latter gesture had on the Italians by explaining that any tardiness on Britain's part to return these ships was due to British fears that they could fall into Soviet hands.<sup>178</sup> The Soviet Union compounded its tactless diplomacy by continuing to accuse the Italian government of subservience to the US and portraying it as a government driving Italy towards the prospect of a third world war because of De Gasperi's willingness to draw Italy into the Western Union.<sup>179</sup> As Valliani observed, the Italian electorate was faced with choosing between two patrons: the Soviet Union which promised 'bleakness and harshness' and 'the West that not only promised but had already offered largesse and had also the support of the ministers of God'.<sup>180</sup> Thus, the choice for the Italians was not that difficult at all.

Bevin maintained his vigilance in the run up to the election and would not allow

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<sup>177</sup>. FO 371/71649/N2771/31/38, 9-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, confidential, telegram, 6-3-1948; FO 371/71650/N5283/31/38, Monthly Review of Soviet Tactics, item 2, drafted by Brown, 5-5-1948.

<sup>178</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/71649/N4279/31/38, Monthly Review of Soviet Tactics, 12-4-1948.

<sup>179</sup>. FO 371/71649/N2771/31/38, 9-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, confidential, telegram, 6-3-1948.

<sup>180</sup>. Valliani, op. cit., p. 113.

his attention to be deflected. In April, just before the election he minuted 'we must not slack on Italy'.<sup>181</sup> He worked in a single-minded fashion to ensure the defeat of the combined Socialist and Communist ticket, to such a degree, that he was prepared to sacrifice his own party's unity. The Labour Party had been deeply traumatized by the way Bevin had decided to use the party machine in the implementation of foreign policy. The splitting of the PSIUP, the isolation of Nenni and the uncritical support for Saragat and Lombardo all had a divisive effect on the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). Many backbench MPs regarded their government's policy with alarm. Party discipline and international solidarity stretched the loyalties of many a Labour MP to such a degree that many of them decided to break party ranks and send a letter of good wishes to Nenni's PSIUP rather than to the Saragat faction, expressing their hopes that '... on Sunday, the Italian people will be left free to exercise their right as citizens and to declare by which government they wanted to be led in a democratic way'.<sup>182</sup> The problem for the Labour leadership was that many of these MPs were real 'Labourites' and not 'fellow travellers' of the Zilliacus and Platt-Mills ilk who, by that time, had been isolated by the mainstream of the PLP to such a degree that they had to send their own telegram of good wishes to Nenni.<sup>183</sup> The Labour government was deeply embarrassed by such actions but was not detracted from its determination and it reciprocated with its own message of unreserved support to the Socialist Unity group. The telegram was signed by Phillips and it was drafted by Healey who advised the Rome Embassy to pass it on to *La Humanita*, Saragat's newspaper, for maximum

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<sup>181</sup>. FO 371/73158/Z2597/93/22, 1-4-48, minute by Bevin, undated.

<sup>182</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3321/93/22, 20-4-1948, telegram, no. 959, FO to Rome, 17-4-1948; FO 371/73160/Z3404/93/22, 22-4-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 950, FO to Rome, 16-4-1948.

<sup>183</sup>. Ibid.



impact.<sup>184</sup>

As the election approached, the low key approach of the British government was vindicated when, despite its gratitude to America for its generous support, the Italian government became nervous at the high visibility of this aid. De Gasperi indicated to the State Department that he would prefer not to receive any more equipment from the US between now and the election. Like the British government he had become concerned that a 'leak' over the level of such assistance would give the Communists a propaganda bonanza.<sup>185</sup> On the other hand, the considerable impact of the Labour Party on the April election result had escaped any criticism linking it to the government and thus showing it for what it really was, an effective foreign intervention in Italy's internal affairs. By 8 April, the Cabinet was confident that the Christian Democrats would emerge victorious from the elections.<sup>186</sup> By 16 April, the Italian security forces were able to revise their previously pessimistic forecasts. They declared that even if trouble did arise they expected it to be localized and sporadic rather than widespread in nature.<sup>187</sup> The Italian police had no doubts that it could contain such activities. Signor Ferrari, the Director General for public security throughout Italy, a permanent official directly responsible to the Minister of the Interior, assured Mallet that the Italian government had taken the necessary measures to safeguard vital services in the event of disorder and a general strike action by keeping large deposits of petrol under safe control, by putting radio stations under supervision and by stationing ships in every important port

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<sup>184</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>185</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2295/93/22, 17-3-48, top secret, telegram, no. 1214, Inverchapel to FO, 15-3-48.

<sup>186</sup>. FO 371/73160/Z3468/93/22, 26-4-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 27-4-1948; CAB 128/12, CM27(48), 'Italy', 8-4-1948.

<sup>187</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3267/93/22, 19-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 682, Rome to FO, 17-4-1948.

ready to maintain law and order.<sup>188</sup> It was also evident that the Prague coup had had a negative effect on the electorate's perception of the PCI and its democratic credentials. Soviet heavy-handedness and insensitivity had provided the anti-communist forces in Italy with a powerful weapon. The passing of the ERP legislation held the prospect of prosperity and last, but not least, the Labour Party's disavowal of the Nennite PSIUP had weakened it to the favour of the Saragat and Lombardo faction.<sup>189</sup>

The result of the 18 April election was a resounding victory for the DC and an unmitigated defeat for the PCI/PSIUP ticket. The DC polled 48.8% of the total vote which translated into a share of 53% of the seats in the Chamber and 43% at the Senate and was nothing less than a triumphant landslide victory. The Popular Front combined share of the vote was a mere 31%. The PSIL or the 'Socialist Unity' ticket also did rather badly revealing its appeal to Italian Socialists as extremely limited. The Saragat-Lombardo grouplet received only 7.1% of the vote.<sup>190</sup> The result was particularly poor for the PSIUP which saw its strength diminish to such a degree as to be driven to playing the role of second fiddle to that of the PCI. Of the 182 seats the PCI/PSIUP ticket won, only 50 went to the PSIUP.<sup>191</sup> Mallet in a reflective post electoral analysis of the result said that the victory of the DC had been clinched by a combination

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<sup>188</sup>. Ibid., Z3266/93/22, 19-4-18, secret, telegram, no. 671, Mallet to FO, 16-4-1948; FO 371/73158/Z3018/93/22, 12-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 650, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948.

<sup>189</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3301/93/22, 19-4-1948, minute by Furlonge, 15-4-1948; Gambino, op. cit., p. 499.

<sup>190</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z4328/640/22, 11-5-1948, savingram, no. 100, Mallet to Bevin, 11-5-1948.

<sup>191</sup>. FO 371/ 73159/Z3371/93/22, 21-4-1948, telegram, no. 705, Mallet to FO, 20-4-1948; minute by Brown, 23-4-1948; FO 371/73160/Z3468/93/22, 26-4-1948, telegram, no. 86, Mallet to FO, 24-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3529/93/22, 27-4-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 27-4-1948; restricted, telegram, no. 93, Rome to FO, 26-4-1948.

of foreign intervention, pressure from the Church and police intimidation.<sup>192</sup>

The Communists reacted to the electoral result with controlled fury. Togliatti condemned and characterized the means employed by the anti-communist forces to ensure the defeat of the PCI/PSIUP electoral union as being the coercive tactics of foreign intervention, government intimidation and unconstitutional Church interference. He went on to reiterate that the policies and tactics of the PCI had been deeply steeped in constitutional principles and that he was not prepared to resort to violent means to overturn the result as he neither wished to harm Italy nor to set back the course of democracy. He declared that his aim was now 'to open and keep open and alive the problem of having free elections in which the representatives of the people will be elected without threats of starvation or war from foreigners or of eternal damnation from the priests'.<sup>193</sup> The Soviet reaction was low key and resigned rather than belligerent. The Soviets simply denounced the result as the unfair product of extensive government interference, pressure from the Vatican and military and economic coercion from the West. 'Radio Moscow' pronounced that the result had been 'neither free, nor democratic and that the Italian people had been deprived of their chance to express their will freely'.<sup>194</sup> Such reactions left a lingering concern with the Foreign Office which feared that such views of the result in years to come would be seen as constituting an accurate account of events, but still there was widespread relief that the Communist

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<sup>192</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z4328/640/22, 11-5-1948, savingram, no. 100, Mallet to Bevin, 11-5-1948.

<sup>193</sup>. FO 371/73160/Z3469/93/22, 26-4-1948, telegram, no. 87, Mallet to FO, 23-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z3529/93/22, 27-4-1948, telegram, no. 93, Rome to FO, 26-4-1948; FO 371/73159/Z3371/93/22, 21-4-1948, telegram, no. 705, Mallet to FO, 20-4-1948; minute by Brown, 23-4-1948.

<sup>194</sup>. Cacace, *op. cit.*, p. 287; FO 371/73160/Z3641/93/22, 30-4-1948, minute by W.H. Laurence, British Consul in Turin, 30-4-1948.

danger for Italy had ebbed, at least for the time being.<sup>195</sup>

The new government was announced on 23 May. It contained eleven Christian Democrats, three Social Unity, two Republicans, two Liberals and two Independent ministers and it secured an emphatic endorsement of its program after winning a vote of confidence.<sup>196</sup> The British government was on the whole satisfied with its composition but also slightly disappointed with the rather minor posts given to the Social Unity ministers.<sup>197</sup> Saragat was given the Ministry of Mercantile Marine and the ceremonial title of Deputy Prime Minister, Roberto Tremelloni was a minister without portfolio and a Vice President of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for reconstruction which enabled Socialist Unity to have a say in the way in which ERP funds were used. Finally, Lombardo was given the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.<sup>198</sup>

### **The Aftermath of the Election**

The victory of the DC meant that for the time being Italy had succeeded in averting the threat of communist rule. The British Embassy in Rome warned however, that the DC government was still facing an uphill task in establishing itself and neutralizing the PCI threat in the long term. Mallet estimated that the Italian government's long-term problems were high inflation, increases in industrial unemployment and the generally forlorn situation of the Italian economy compared to the prewar period. These problems perpetuated social

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<sup>195</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/71650/N5036/31/38, 29-4-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 811, FO to Moscow, 26-4-1948.

<sup>196</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z4678/640/22, 7-6-1948, telegram, no. 124, Mallet to FO, 4-6-1948; Vigezzi, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>197</sup>. FO 371/73161/Z3784/93/22, 4-5-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 5-5-1948.

<sup>198</sup>. FO 371/73162/Z4378/93/22, 25-5-1948, minute by Brown, 26-5-1948, telegram, no. 866, Mallet to FO, 24-5-1948.

discontent and support for the PCI.<sup>199</sup> In 1938 the net value of Italian agricultural production was 43.1% of its GNP, in 1946 it was only 32.8%. In 1938 industrial production in Italy was 40.1% of its GNP, in 1946 it had fallen to only 12.5%.<sup>200</sup> Unemployment stood at above 2,000,000 and it continued to rise at approximately 130,000 per year, despite the fact that during 1947 some 272,000 Italians had emigrated.<sup>201</sup> Bevin was particularly concerned with the persistence of high unemployment and the discontent it brought which could only work to the benefit of the Communists and the Socialists. Although it was obvious that emigration alone could not solve Italy's unemployment problem, he felt that he had to try to secure outlets for Italy's surplus labour. He encouraged the Australian government to accept more Italian immigrants and sought to find a solution to the shipping problems which were holding back the flow of Italian emigrants to Australia.

The absence of agrarian reform was also seen as being a deeply intractable problem by the British government caused by the combination of such diverse factors as overpopulation, centuries of governmental neglect, poverty, backwardness, uneconomic exploitation of the infertile land, lack of planning, and the devastation of war. A long-term solution to the agricultural problem was deemed to be of the utmost importance as 47% of the Italian population was

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<sup>199</sup>. FO 371/73160/Z3549/93/22, 27-4-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 140, Mallet to Bevin, 23-4-1948; FO 371/73156/Z1102/93/22, 10-2-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 52, Mallet to Bevin, 2-2-1948.

<sup>200</sup>. FO 371/73163/Z5781/93/22, 16-7-1948, restricted, despatch, no. 221, Mallet to Bevin, 28-7-1948; minute by Pemberton- Pigott, 15-7-1948; *ibid.*, Z5900/93/22, 20-8-1948, minute by H. Trevellyan, Economic Relations Department of the FO, 9-7-1948.

<sup>201</sup>. FO 371/73162/Z4959/93/22, 18-6-1948, minute by Laurence, 18-6-1948.

dependent on the land for its livelihood.<sup>202</sup> The situation was further exacerbated by the fact that seventy four people had to earn a living out of each square metre of arable land which revealed a huge concentration of population. No other Western European country presented such a dismal picture.<sup>203</sup> Mallet suggested that the negative effects of these problems could be offset by the positive aspects of the Marshall Plan, the support of the Catholic Church and more importantly by ensuring Italian participation in the major Western organizations.<sup>204</sup>

When the British Cabinet met to discuss the election result it decided that the activities of the Labour Party in Italy should not fold, but that it should intensify its involvement with the Saragat and Lombardo faction in order to build them up as a moderating and reforming counterweight within the De Gasperi government. It was hoped that this would push the Italian government into adopting positive policies to solve the problems of the country rather than relying merely on sterile anti-communism. Similarly, the Cabinet had decided that developments in the Italian trade union movement should be monitored closely, with advice being given through the TUC to anti-communist trade unionists in order to reduce the communist hold on the CGIL.<sup>205</sup> These decisions, coupled with the Russia Committee's advice that Britain's role at this stage was to 'supply ideological leadership to democracy', formed the mainstay

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<sup>202</sup>. FO 371/73163/Z5781/92/22, 16-7-1948, restricted, despatch, no. 221, Mallet to Bevin, 28-7-1948; minute by Pemberton- Pigott, 15-7-1948; *ibid.*, Z5900/93/22, 20-8-1948, minute by Trevellyan, 9-7-1948.

<sup>203</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup>. FO 371/73160/Z3549/93/22, 27-4-1948, despatch, no. 140, Mallet to Bevin, 23-4-1948; FO 371/73156/Z1102/93/22, 10-2-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 52, Mallet to Bevin, 2-2-1948.

<sup>205</sup>. FO 371/71651/N9092/31/38, 12-8-1948, minute by R.M.A. Hankey, head of Northern Department and Russia Committee, 3-5-1948.

of British policy towards Italian politics during the rest of 1948.<sup>206</sup> On 1 May, Mallet visited De Gasperi to assure him of the British government's continued support and to offer him help in the case of a communist inspired emergency which the Italian security forces could not control.<sup>207</sup>

The interest of the Labour government in the affairs of Italy remained undiminished after the triumph of Christian Democracy and its activities developed in several priority areas. First, to push the new Italian government into adopting a programme of reform. Second, to strengthen the Saragat and Lombardo grouping even further internationally. Third, to monitor the developments within the CGIL as closely as possible with the ultimate aim of helping its anti-communist elements gain control of the Italian trades union movement from the communists. Last, but not least, to spearhead an information campaign in Italy which would achieve the twin objectives of reducing the appeal of communism and keep Britain's image at the forefront of Italian public opinion as being an example of a democratic country that had embarked on a successful programme of social reform and justice.<sup>208</sup>

As far as the first priority was concerned, the British government believed that immediate practical steps had to be taken by the Italian government itself to rectify the agrarian situation in general and to address the situation of the South in particular. Previous encounters with the Italian government to discuss

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<sup>206</sup>. FO 371/71650/N5416/31/38, 10-5-1948, minutes by Wallinger and 29-4-1948, Hankey, 28-4-1948.

<sup>207</sup>. FO 371/73160/Z3713/93/22, 3-5-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 764, Mallet to FO, 2-5-1948.

<sup>208</sup>. FO 953/140/P6277/480/950, 2-8-1948, memorandum, 28-7-1948; *ibid.*, P6494/480/950, 9-8-1948, minute by A.A. Dudley, head of Information Policy Department, (IPD) 19-8-1948; FO 953/137/P7811/415/950, 27-9-1948, minute by H.C. Bowen, Head of Eastern European Information Department, 4-10-1948.

the issue had left deep doubts as to De Gasperi's commitment to any meaningful reform fearing as he did that it would harm the interests of his landowning supporters. The only hope of the British lay in the fact that the Americans had reached similar conclusions and that the impetus for addressing the issue was likely to come via the ERP. One of the main objectives of European Cooperation Administration (ECA) in Italy was to promote 'industrial and agricultural production'.<sup>209</sup> In view of this, Bevin concluded that Britain ought to adopt a two-pronged step strategy. On the one hand, Britain had to use its influence with the Americans to ensure that the latter steered the Italian government towards embarking on 'a bold development', an opportunity which for Bevin was not to be missed.<sup>210</sup> On the other hand, the Foreign Office concluded that priorities two and three be executed as soon as possible since the situation was too bad to wait for long-term plans to work. The result was the decision for Britain to embark on a propaganda offensive in the Italian countryside to lessen the appeal of communism. The idea was for a campaign based on contrasting the benefits of co-operative farming as opposed to the oppression of the Russian peasantry caused by the collectivization forced upon them by the Bolsheviks.<sup>211</sup> The campaign was based on the IRD's paper on the collectivisation process of the USSR and its various papers promoting social democracy.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup>. FO 371/73159/Z3102/93/22, 13-4-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 71, Mallet to FO, 10-4-1948; FO 371/73158/2896/93/22, 6-4-1948, minute by Brown, 11-5-1948; FO 371/73161/Z3756/93/22, 4-5-1948, minute by Bevin, undated.

<sup>210</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>211</sup>. FO 371/73163/Z5899/93/22, 20-7-1948, minutes by Carlyle, 25-8-1948, Pemberton-Pigott, 26-8-1948 and Brown, 2-9-1948. On I.R.D. see Morris, C.J., and Lucas, W.S., 'A Very British Crusade: The Information Research Department and the Start of the Cold War', in Aldrich, R.J., *British Intelligence Strategy during the Cold War*, London, 1992; Smith, L., 'Covert British Propaganda: the Information Research Department, 1944-77', *Millennium*, Vol. 9, 1980, pp. 67-83.

<sup>212</sup>. Ibid., minute by J.P. Clough, IRD, 4-9-1948.



To make this aim succeed all means of disseminating propaganda were deployed. The British Council, the BBC and the Labour Party were all drafted in to carry out the information policy adopted by the Foreign Office. The BBC was a particularly useful tool, as quickly, it had become apparent that its programmes were very popular with the Italian public and that, even more importantly, in times of crisis the Italians tuned to it for their news as it was perceived to be more objective, accurate and significantly less biased than the Voice of America.<sup>213</sup> The problem of using the BBC was however, that its Italian audience was mainly middle and upper class and that it failed to get across to the Italian workers and peasants who were Bevin's main target. The Foreign Office expended considerable effort to ensure that the BBC varied the times of its broadcasts to Italy in order to reach the target audience and that even when expenditure cuts forced the BBC to reduce its output to Europe its Italian commitment remained unaltered. The BBC was also asked to ensure that its broadcasts contained material that appealed to working class audiences and to include coverage of labour movement activities from both sides of the 'Iron Curtain' divide.<sup>214</sup> The Information Office of the Rome Embassy worked indefatigably to ensure that the British message got through. Sir David Isolani, one of the Information Officers of the British Embassy, toured the country with the energy of a zealot and used RAI to deliver lectures on social reform in

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<sup>213</sup>. FO 953/431/PW523/523/922, 16-3-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 148, E. Howard, Press Office at the British Embassy in Rome, to FO, 'Quarterly Report of Information Work in Italy for October- December 1947', 5-3-1948 ; *ibid.*, PW1000/523/922, 29-6-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 380, Press Office, Rome to FO, 'Quarterly Report of Information Work in Italy for March 1948', 21-6-1948; FO 953/432/PW1225/532/922, 21-9-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 472, M.N.F. Steward, Press *Attaché*, Rome, to FO, 'Quarterly Report of Information Work in Italy, April - June 1948', 15-9-1948; *ibid.*, PW1562/523/922, 13-12-1948, confidential, 'Quarterly Report of Information Work in Italy, July - September 1948', Howard, Press Office, Rome to S.H.C. Woolrych, head of WEID, 13-12-1948.

<sup>214</sup>. FO 953/137/P8390/415/950, 18-10-1948, minutes by Warner, 16-11-1948, and Dudley, 12-11-1948; memorandum, Christopher P. Mayhew, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, FO, for Bevin, undated; CAB 129/23, CP(48)8, top secret, memorandum by Bevin, 4-1-1948

Britain. His lecture prior to the Genoa Congress of the Italian Socialist Party entitled 'Security from cradle to grave' launched COMISCO's offensive against PSIUP.<sup>215</sup> The role of the British Council was to inform Western Europeans of the current achievements of the UK and its contribution to Western civilization.<sup>216</sup> The enlarged International Department of the Labour Party was employed to carry out the objectives of British foreign policy in Italy and Labour local authorities were encouraged to invite Italian Social Democrats to visit Britain and find out about British local government practices.<sup>217</sup> The concept of twinning British and Italian towns was also adopted in an effort to support the Saragat and Lombardo socialists and promote Britain.<sup>218</sup> Film and newsreel were also used to good effect as British films attracted audiences of approximately one million per quarter.<sup>219</sup> Invitations to Italian journalists to visit Britain continued undiminished, but this time journalists who were identified as friendly to Britain were also given IRD-produced digests to use as a basis for articles when they returned to Italy. By September, the Rome Embassy began

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<sup>215</sup>. FO 953/432/PW1562/523/922, 13-12-1948, confidential, letter, J.A. Pilcher, Rome to Woolrych, 13-12-1948; minute by Woolrych 24-1-1949; *ibid.*, PW1225/532/922, 21-9-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 472, Steward, Press Officer, Rome, to FO, 'Quarterly Report of Information Work in Italy, April - June 1948', 15-9-1948; FO 953/431/PW1000/523/922, 29-6-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 380, Press Office, Rome to FO, Quarterly Report of Information Work in Italy for March 1948, 21-6-1948.

<sup>216</sup>. FO 953/140/P6277/480/950, 2-8-1948, FO memorandum, 28-7-1948.

<sup>217</sup>. FO 953/142/P4323/1319/950, 18-6-1948, minute by Duddley, 20-4-1948; conclusions of a ministerial meeting, 29-5-1948; *ibid.*, P4965/1319/950, 18-6-1948, minute by Mayhew, 6-5-1948; *ibid.*, P4967/1319/950, 18-6-1948, minute by Mayhew, 11-5-1948; *ibid.*, P4969/1319/950, 18-6-1948; memorandum by Mayhew, 31-5-1948; GEN 226, 2nd meeting of the Cabinet European Policy Committee, 13-4-1948.

<sup>218</sup>. FO 953/142/P4323/1319/950, 26-5-1948, minutes by Kirkpatrick, McNeil, and Mayhew, 29-5-1948.

<sup>219</sup>. FO 953/432/PW1562/523/922, 21-12-1948, confidential, E. Howard, Press Office, Rome to Woolrych, FO, 'Quarterly Report of Information Work in Italy, July - September 1948', 13-12-1948.

to see articles appear in the Christian Democratic press which were based on IRD anti-communist material and the Embassy was able to report that Italian public opinion was favourable to the reforms the Labour government had undertaken in Britain.<sup>220</sup>

The Foreign Office continued to take a close interest in the affairs of the PSIUP and it hoped strongly that the fusion of the Lombardo and Saragat factions would create, the hitherto, elusive Italian social democratic force to eclipse Nenni. The Socialist Unity Party, however, was plagued by internal strife, personal rivalries and frustrations with their posts in the De Gasperi Cabinet. Above all, the Party had doubts that the government which they supported would pursue a progressive programme of reform and that it would not use ERP funds for its own narrow political party ends.<sup>221</sup> In view of these circumstances, the Embassy in Rome became concerned that in order for the Foreign Office to bring about this desired fusion of factions there was a danger that it could compromise the British government itself and the Embassy. As early as March, Mallet had expressed his unease with Warner's idea of using his Embassy as a centre for IRD activities and he reiterated this position again in May by stating that he would prefer it if his role and that of Braine could be limited to simply giving general advice.<sup>222</sup> The Western Department entertained similar fears that should Britain be implicated in getting involved in the affairs and wrangles of the Socialist Unity Party it would 'recoil' onto the Embassy.<sup>223</sup> Such concerns were brushed aside and it was decided that Braine, at least,

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<sup>220</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>221</sup>. FO 371/73162/Z4461/93/22, 29-5-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 1-6-1948.

<sup>222</sup>. FO 1110/1/PR1/1/913, 23-2-1948, secret, telegram, no. 489, Warner to Rome, 1-3-1948; FO 371/73160/Z4208/93/22, 19-5-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 846, Mallet to FO, 18-5-1948.

<sup>223</sup>. Ibid., Z3468/93/22, 26-4-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 27-4-1948.

should keep in close touch with any developments and that his task ought to be to encourage all the constituent elements of the Socialist Unity ticket to fuse together into 'a stable Party' and to urge them to continue cooperating with the Christian Democrats and the anti-communist alliance regardless of their misgivings.<sup>224</sup>

The next step in helping Saragat and Lombardo was taken at the COMISCO meeting in Vienna on 3 June. Nenni had been invited to attend as a delegate since the PSIUP was one of its constituent members. The fact that the Labour Party had failed to block his invitation in favour of Saragat and Lombardo created consternation to many in the Foreign Office. They did not understand the workings of the Socialist International and that it was not the British Labour Party which decided who received an invitation and who did not but that it was COMISCO which issued invitations to its members and that the Labour Party alone could not do anything. What Bevin and Healey did was to encourage Saragat and Lombardo to send delegates to Vienna requesting admission as members and to reassure them that all the Western European Socialist parties wanted to do all they could to assist them. Saragat accepted this assurance grudgingly, feeling that Labour had shied away from totally discrediting Nenni. Healey prepared the ground to ensure that the Saragat and Lombardo delegates were admitted on a basis of equality with the PSIUP delegates.<sup>225</sup> At the conference it became evident rapidly that the PSIUP was not going to be treated as a normal delegation but was put in the position of a defendant having to explain its links with the PCI. Its continued membership of COMISCO hinged upon Nenni's willingness to renounce all links with the PCI; the

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<sup>224</sup>. FO 371/73161/Z4208/93/22, 19-5-1948, minutes by Brown, 19-5-1948 and Crosthwaite, 28-5-1948.

<sup>225</sup>. FO 371/73161/Z4330/93/22, 22-5-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 874, Mallet to FO, 25-5-1948.

alternative was expulsion. In view of Nenni's unwillingness to undertake such action the PSIUP was suspended from membership pending the outcome of its Genoa Conference of 27 June 1948 and the Socialist Unity Party was accepted as a full member. A commission made up of delegates from Britain, France, Belgium and Holland was set up to scrutinise the actions of the PSIUP. If, at its conference in Genoa, the PSIUP relieved Nenni from the leadership and severed its links with the PCI, then the commission would assume the task of reunifying the socialist forces in Italy.<sup>226</sup>

The main aim behind the various activities of the International Office of the Labour Party was to weaken and discredit the PSIUP to such a degree that the Party would wither away through member defection and then to replace the depleted membership by organising a regrouping of anti-communist Italian socialists. The processes that would lead to the eclipse of Nenni would be achieved through poor electoral results, the international isolation of the PSIUP and the international recognition of the Socialist Unity forces. The Foreign Office believed in the success of such a policy as the post-April PSIUP was a party in deep shock, reeling from defeat, riven by internal dissent and deeply dissatisfied with what Romita had called the PCI's 'imperialist attitude towards the PSI'.<sup>227</sup> The PSIUP Congress in Genoa failed to produce the desired result of replacing Nenni, but it once again revealed the deep divisions within the party and indicated that it would have a lot of healing and rethinking to do before it became an important factor in the Italian political scene. It also had far-reaching implications for the relationship between the PCI and the PSIUP.

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<sup>226</sup>. FO 371/73162/Z5054/93/22, 22-6-1948, report by Healey, 4 to 7 June 1948; minute by Carlyle, 7-7-1948; *ibid.*, Z5187/93/22, 25-6-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 1065, Rome to FO, 25-6-1948; telegram, no. 1472, FO to Rome, 25-6-1948.

<sup>227</sup>. FO 371/73162/Z4791/93/22, 11-6-1948, telegram, no. 129, Mallet to FO, 10-7-1948.

The delegates were still in shock at the election result and the outcome of the Congress was a strange hybrid of disorientation, fusionism and pro and anti-Nennite feeling.<sup>228</sup> Furthermore, the COMISCO decision to suspend the PSIUP had exactly the opposite effect to the one intended, galvanizing all delegates behind Nenni. Even centrists such as Romita and Altiero Spinelli who in the past had expressed dissent, now voiced their opposition against what they perceived as blatant intervention in the affairs of their party.<sup>229</sup> It was obvious that at this stage intervention in PSIUP affairs was not likely to produce any results.

Whilst the PSIUP was licking its wounds an opportunity arose for intervention in the murky waters of the Italian trade union movement. The CGIL, despite the split of the PSIUP in 1946, the exclusion crisis of May 1947 and the emphatic victory of the Christian Democrats in the 18 April elections, continued to be the only labour organization that represented the interests of workers in Italy. The Pact of Rome, to which Christian Democratic, Socialist and Communist trade unionists had subscribed from June 1944 in the interests of the unity of the working class, was still intact and no rival organization had as yet posed a challenge to it or to the Communist supremacy within it.<sup>230</sup> Giuseppe Di Vittorio, the Communist secretary of the CGIL, had emerged as the dominant personality in the trade union movement despite the fact that he was supposed

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<sup>228</sup>. FO 371/73163/Z5488/93/22, 7-7-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1129, Mallet to FO, 4-7-1948; FO 371/73162/Z4979/93/22, 18-6-1948, telegram, no. 136, Rome to FO, 17-6-1948; *Avanti!*, 5-6-1948; Mammarella, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>229</sup>. Ibid., Z5054/93/22, 22-6-1948, report by Healey, 4 to 7 June 1948; minute by Carlyle, 7-7-1948; ibid., Z5187/93/22, 25-6-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 1065, Rome to FO, 25-6-1948; telegram, no. 1472, FO to Rome, 25-6-1948.

<sup>230</sup>. Mammarella, op. cit., p. 129; Salvati, B., 'The Rebirth of Italian Trade Unionism, 1943-1952', Woolf, S., (ed.), *The Rebirth of Italy, 1943-50*, London, 1972, pp. 185-201; Ginsborg, op. cit., pp. 61 and 86-7.

to have equal status with Achille Grandi, the Christian Democrat and Oreste Lizzadri, the Socialist secretary, in the triumvirate that made up the leadership of CGIL. The reason for his pre-eminence was mainly due to his charismatic and indefatigable personality, the benefits which accrued to the PCI from cooperating with the Socialists and the fact the Communists made up the majority of the rank and file of the movement.<sup>231</sup> The control the PCI exercised over the trade union movement coupled with its defeat at the polls had made the West wary that the next plan of the PCI was to harm the success of the Marshall Plan. The British government commenced to examine the means by which they could help non-communist Italian trade unionists gain control from the Communists. The situation they faced however was infinitely complex. The lack of an organised rival movement to the Communists was one part of the problem. The other was to determine in which direction to push the non-communists, whether Britain should urge them to splinter the trade union movement or simply to encourage them to play the long-term game of eroding communist control from within. The Russia Committee which was asked to study the issue quickly split into two strands of thought. The belligerent strand was represented by Robert M. A. Hankey, head of Northern Department, who proposed that the best way forward was to divide the Italian organised labour by promoting alternative trade union movements that could rival the Communists and that the execution of this monumental task was to fall on the TUC which was to forge links with 'white trades unions'. Hankey also suggested another, more radical approach, namely to replace communist trade unionists with 'reliable' socialist ones. A campaign based on false tax evasion and black marketeering charges against prominent Italian trade unionists could be engineered to facilitate their arrest.<sup>232</sup> Wiser counsels prevailed. M. Gee,

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<sup>231</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>232</sup>. FO 371/71650/N5404/31/38, 8-5-1948, draft memorandum by Hankey, 'The Communist Campaign: the Next Phase', undated; minute by Hankey, 3-5-1948.

Russia Committee, reminded everyone that there were limitations on what Britain could do and its aim ought to be simply to 'free' the CGIL from communist control and not to make a 'martyr' out of Di Vittorio. The division of the movement was not the best way forward, as it could result in the creation of weak catholic trade unions which would fail to attract secular trade unionists to the benefit of the PCI. He proposed that the British government ought to utilize the TUC to show anti-communist trade unionists how to work from within to transform unionism into a genuine democratic movement fighting for traditional trade union interests. He warned that hasty actions would result in weak and divided unions that would fail to attract members and fail to challenge the pre-eminence of the PCI.<sup>233</sup> He felt that Britain should exert responsible influence and not be involved in the heavy-handed tactics of the American Federation of Labour, (AFL).<sup>234</sup> Braine from Rome, supported Gee, stating that in his opinion, anti-communist trade unionists should fight from within and wrest the CGIL from communist control.<sup>235</sup>

These involved discussions quickly became irrelevant as developments in Rome moved unexpectedly and in such a way that, for a while, the West held its breath at the seeming commencement of a communist insurgency in Italy. On 14 July 1948, Antonio Pallante, a Sicilian fanatic attempted to assassinate Togliatti as the latter was standing outside the Montecitorio.<sup>236</sup> The Left considered this not the isolated attack of a lone fanatic on one man but a designed and orchestrated attack on each and every one of them. As soon as workers heard the news, they stopped work. Large factories such as FIAT were

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<sup>233</sup>. Ibid., N9092/31/38, 12-8-1948, minute by M. Gee, 3-7-1948.

<sup>234</sup>. FO 371/71650/N5404/31/38, 8-5-1948, minute by Gee, 6-5-1948.

<sup>235</sup>. FO 371/73218/Z6302/3628/22, 4-8-1948, letter, Braine to Gee, 30-7-1948.

<sup>236</sup>. Ginsborg, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-120.



occupied by armed workers, state buildings were taken over, spontaneous demonstrations erupted in every city, road blocks were set up and partisans took out the weapons they had hidden away at the end of the war. At Abbazia San Salvatore, in Tuscany, two policemen were killed and the telephone exchange controlling communications between North and South was captured. In Turin, many prominent industrialists were taken hostage. Genoa for a while, passed from government control and into the hands of the strikers. Di Vittorio proclaimed a general strike which in fact had already begun.<sup>237</sup> Suddenly Italy, seemingly hovered on the brink of insurrection because, as Ginsborg has put it, 'all the frustrations of the previous three years - the restraints accepted by the partisan movement, the failure to achieve reform, the humiliation of mass unemployment, the defeat of the Popular Front - now welled to the surface'.<sup>238</sup> But it was not to be. Italy's so called 'last insurrectionary moment' vanished as quickly and unexpectedly as it arose. Togliatti's survival and his calming influence succeeded in defusing the situation and the emergency passed without any real threat to De Gasperi's authority.<sup>239</sup> The whole PCI and CGIL machine was mobilized to ensure that the situation did not escalate beyond control. Secchia, Longo and Di Vittorio, who was in America, worked day and night to restrain and reverse the potential uprising.<sup>240</sup> On 16 July the general strike was called off and normalcy returned. Togliatti honoured the undertaking

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<sup>237</sup>. Ibid.; Mammarella, G., op. cit., p. 214-5; Nenni, P., *Tempo di Guerra Fredda: Diari, 1943-1956*, Milano, 1981, pp. 444-446; Salvati, op. cit., pp. 201-202; Hughes, H. S., *The United States and Italy*, Cambridge, Mass., 1979, p. 157. For a detailed treatment of these events see Tobagi, W., *La rivoluzione impossibile*, Milano, 1978; Orlandini, A., *L'insurrezione proletaria nella provincia di Siena in risposta all' attentato Togliatti*, Firenze, 1976; Serafini, G., *I ribelli della Montagna*, Montepulciano, 1981.

<sup>238</sup>. Ginsborg, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>239</sup>. *The Economist*, 17-7-1948; FO 371/73163/Z5734/93/22, 14-7-1948, minute by Laurence, 14-7-1948; ibid., Z5763/93/22, 16-7-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 16-7-1948; ibid., Z5824/93/22, 19-7-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 1192, Rome to FO, 16-7-1948.

<sup>240</sup>. Travis, op. cit., p. 105.

he had given to sceptical Italians that he would respect democratic practice and its rules<sup>241</sup> and he always maintained that at this moment revolution was not possible.<sup>242</sup> De Gasperi was not placated at all by CGIL leaders who had poured in to see and reassure him that revolution was not on their minds. Giulio Andreotti revealed later, that as soon as De Gasperi heard of the incident of the *Via della Missione* he met in closed session with Scelba immediately to draw up and put into effect a counterrevolutionary plan.<sup>243</sup> The PCI's restraint showed that it was no longer a revolutionary party even in the face of lost elections and political repression.<sup>244</sup> This attitude of restraint did not register with either the Italian government or its American patrons and the PCI was in for a tough time. With its supporters disillusioned and the State bent on revenge, the Party entered a period of '*gli anni duri*'. It had suffered three major defeats in only a year and faced the possibility of having its activities curtailed by law.<sup>245</sup>

The events of mid-July 1948 were to have far-reaching and irreversible implications for the Italian organized labour movement whose unity was already precarious after the exclusion crisis and the Christian Democratic landslide in the April election. Di Vittorio's sanctioning of a general strike had provoked the wrath of the ACLI, the Association of Italian Christian Workers and gave Pastore its leader, the opportunity to implement America's instructions and break away from CGIL.<sup>246</sup> Colonel Tom Lane, the American Labour *Attaché* in Rome, had previously advised Pastore to sever his links with CGIL and form

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<sup>241</sup>. Salvati, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>242</sup>. Bocca, op. cit., p.523-5; Ginsborg, op. cit., pp. 120 and 215.

<sup>243</sup>. Andreotti, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>244</sup>. Travis, op. cit., p.105.

<sup>245</sup>. Ginsborg, op. cit., pp. 186-7.

<sup>246</sup>. Pisani, op. cit., pp.111-2.

a splinter trade union and abundant funds were made available from the State Department to support 'Free CGIL'. Despite Di Vittorio's attempts at mediation and his calling off the strike the splintering of the movement had become unstoppable.<sup>247</sup>

The CGIL tried to avoid such a catastrophe by stating the ACLI declaration had broken the premises of the Pact of Rome. On 26 July 1948, the Executive Committee of the CGIL, in an attempt to diminish the impact of ACLI, called for the expulsion of the ACLI leadership from office and membership and appealed over its head to Catholic rank and file workers to remain loyal to the CGIL, which guaranteed freedom of expression, respect for religious beliefs and political opinions. The ACLI's reaction was, on the one hand, to refuse to accept the expulsion, stating that the Executive Committee action was *ultra vires* and on the other, to go to the courts and ask for the funds of CGIL to be frozen. The ACLI, however, failed to carry with them the PRI and Saragat trade unionists who whilst receiving covert funding from the USA still believed that they should not splinter the movement and should continue to fight from within to wrest control away from the Communists.<sup>248</sup>

These events had precipitated major debates in the different socialist groupings on their political future and the mutual relationships. During August, there were declarations and calls by both the PSIUP's Executive Committee and the socialist novelist Ignazio Silone for the reunification of all the socialist parties. The calls capitalised on the speech by Jacometti, the new Secretary

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<sup>247</sup>. Carew, A., *Labour under the Marshall Plan: The Politics of Productivity and the Marketing of Management Science*, Manchester, 1987, pp. 102-105; Mammarella, op. cit., p. 215.

<sup>248</sup>. FO 371/73218/Z6302/3628/22, 4-8-1948, letter, Braine to Gee, 30-7-1948; *ibid.*, Z6143/3628/22, 6-8-1948, telegram, Mallet to FO, 6-8-1948; FO 371/71713/N8986/8986/ 38, 11-8-1948, IRD Digest, 21-8-1948.

of the PSIUP, who proclaimed that the 'popular front' was dead and the Party's application to COMISCO for readmission. They also capitalised on the decision of the Popular Front's Executive on 12 August to issue a manifesto which declared its dissolution whilst pledging the continuation of a common line of action. Lombardo too, seemed to support the commencement of tentative negotiations for the reunification of all socialist groups. There were also rumours insinuating that Saragat and Lombardo were thinking of quitting the government to facilitate reunification, something which Saragat contradicted forcefully on 18 August.<sup>249</sup> This atmosphere prepared the road for discussions between Silone and the new PSIUP secretary. Any such hopes, however, were dashed by the decisions of the 28th PSIUP Congress in Florence which continued to endorse 'fusionist' policies. The result of this endorsement was to precipitate a further schism in the movement when Romita, feeling that he stood no chance of reuniting the PSIUP with the PSLI, left to form the *Partito Socialista Unificato*, which in 1951 joined with the PSLI to form the PSDI.<sup>250</sup> Thus, all these multifarious attempts at unification were to founder on the rocks of the Cold War and on the PSIUP's resistance to renouncing the Pact of Unity of 1946. COMISCO went on, after a year's suspension, to expel the PSIUP during its Amsterdam conference of 13 to 16 May 1949. The Party was told that it would only be allowed to rejoin when it broke away from all links with the PCI.<sup>251</sup>

The formation of the new splinter union movement was announced on 19 September 1948. Its formation was viewed with resignation and sadness from London. Its main problem as identified by the Rome Embassy, was the Catholic

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<sup>249</sup>. Ibid., IRD Digest, no. 4, 31-8-1948; FO 371/73164/Z6830/93/22, 23-8-1948.

<sup>250</sup>. Mammarella, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>251</sup>. *The Manchester Guardian*, 17-5-1949.

nature of the new organization which would prevent workers from deserting the CGIL *en masse*, thus condemning the new structure to marginalization. Ultimately, in Braine's words, 'the only people to lose [would] be the ordinary workers whose proper interests will not be safeguarded by a divided movement'. Gee too, felt that the anti-communist forces within the CGIL had lost a unique opportunity to gain control of the organization.<sup>252</sup> Within two years the once united Italian organized labour movement had splintered into three, the CGIL, which represented Communists and Socialists, the Confederazione Italiana dei Sindacati Liberi, CISL, which represented Catholic and Christian Democrat workers and Unione Italiana del Lavoro, UIL, which represented the interests of the Social Democrats and Republicans and which was established in spring 1950.<sup>253</sup> The CISL, despite the despondency of London and its initial teething problems, grew under the tutelage of Irving Brown of the AFL and American financial backing into a dangerous rival to the CGIL.<sup>254</sup> CISL was never as large in membership as the CGIL but its initially insignificant following soon increased when it emerged as the favourite of the employers whilst the Communists were discriminated against.<sup>255</sup> In the pseudo-insurrectionary climate the attempt on Togliatti's life had created, there had been little time for subtle British plans to take seed. America's direct, uncomplicated and well-endowed approach appeared to be the best way forward for the anti-communists forces.

### Conclusion

The British government was equally concerned as the Americans to see the

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<sup>252</sup>. FO 371/73164/Z7062/93/22, 20-9-1948, letter, Braine to Gee, 14-8-1948, letter, Gee to Braine, 27-9-1948.

<sup>253</sup>. Mammarella, *op. cit.*, p. 214-5; Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

<sup>254</sup>. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 169; Pisani, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>255</sup>. Salvati, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-206.

Unity of Action Pact suffer a humiliating defeat on 18 April 1948 and took all the necessary steps to ensure that it did. The whole essence of British policy directed towards helping the De Gasperi government during the 1948 elections was based on the premise of anti-communism and the desire to promote 'the British way to socialism'. To achieve these objectives the British Labour government had to ensure that the Communists and the Socialists were defeated comprehensively and that they could not play the role of the 'king-maker' in the formation of the next Italian government. Its differing approach from the Americans can be narrowed down to pragmatism and a different reading of the situation. The Labour government preferred to keep its activities in the realms of secrecy and deniability rather than in overt and visible intervention. It knew that it was playing a supporting role to that of the Americans, that it lacked the influence America could muster and exert on Italian politics, so its intervention was bound to be less spectacular than that of America. It was also mindful of not provoking accusations of overt interference in Italian domestic politics which could ultimately play into the hands of the Italian Communists and their allies.<sup>256</sup> A supporting role, however, in this case, did not mean a subordinate one. Britain resisted American proposals resolutely when it judged them to be detrimental to the cause in hand or damaging to the last residues of British influence in Italy. After all, Britain sought to offer an alternative model of Italian political development than did the Americans and had to be careful how to pursue its acceptance without alienating and offending.<sup>257</sup>

It was for these reasons that the British government used the international

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<sup>256</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z1957/93/22, 8-3-1948, minute by Brown for Bevin, 9-3-1948. FO 371/73158/Z3044/93/22, 12-4-1948, minutes by Brown, 10-4-1948 and Crosthwaite, 16-4-1948.

<sup>257</sup>. CAB 129/23, CM(48)8, top secret, memorandum, Bevin, 4-1-1948.

organs of the Labour Party and the British Trade Union movement to carry the weight of its intervention in Italian politics.<sup>258</sup> It is almost impossible to describe Bevin's unflinching determination to clinch the correct Italian electoral result as being either subtle or moderate. They appear so only in the light of America's unfettered interventionism in order to keep the Communists at bay. Once the elections were won, British interest in the affairs of Italy did not peter out. There was still a commitment to ensure that De Gasperi pursued reform, that the British way to socialism could, somehow, take seed in Italy and that Britain could maintain a role in the affairs of the country. This commitment was expressed through the involvement and actions of the Foreign Office in co-ordinating the Labour Party and the TUC and to influence developments in the Italian working class movement. That, Italy, in the end did not become a social democratic haven was not because of lack of want and effort by Britain, but because of Italy's own political landscape and American intervention in the affairs of the country which did not allow time for British plans to mature. De Gasperi's massive landslide on April 1948 and the attempt on Togliatti's life in July meant that there was little time for Saragat to form an effective social democratic alternative to Nenni's PSIUP and it signified the end of any meaningful chance for Britain to provide Italy with political leadership.

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<sup>258</sup> FO 371/73160/Z3468/93/22, 26-4-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 27-4-1948; FO 371/73159/Z3370/93/22, 21-4-1948, minute by Roberts, 17-8-1948.

## Chapter Four

### The Birth of the North Atlantic Alliance: Britain and the Issue of Italian Membership

At the beginning of 1948, Britain was faced with the question of how best to approach Western European security issues with regards to the Soviet threat. For Britain, the creation of an Atlantic alliance formed a major strand in a foreign policy which aimed to create a worldwide system of alliances.<sup>1</sup> In view of the seriousness of the perceived Soviet threat, Bevin concluded that a North Atlantic pact ought to be signed as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup> The creation of such a pact would secure two important aims. First, it would mean a long-term commitment by the United States to defend Western Europe, which would restore and boost the confidence of the beleaguered Western European governments. The mere presence of numbers of American occupation troops in Western Germany was not seen as a convincing alternative as it afforded only an indirect assurance to Italy and Scandinavia. Second, a pact would

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<sup>1</sup>. Anderson, T. H., *The United States, Great Britain and the Cold War, 1944-47*, Columbia, Mo., 1981; Attlee, C. R. A., *As It Happened*, London, 1954, p. 239; Barker, E., *The British between the Superpowers, 1945-50*, Toronto, 1983; Bullock, op. cit., Chapter 13, passim; Cook, op. cit., pp. 117-8; De Staercke, A., *NATO's Anxious Birth: The Prophetic Vision of the 1940s*, London, 1985; Dockrill, M.L. and Young, J.W., (eds) *British Foreign Policy, 1945-56*, London, 1989; Edmonds, R., *Setting the Mould: The United States and Britain, 1945-50*, Oxford, 1986, p. 177; Hathaway, R. M., *Ambiguous Partnership: Britain and America, 1944-47*, New York, 1981; Ireland, T., *Creating the Entangling Alliance: The Origins of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, London, 1981, pp. 121-9; Kaplan, L. S., *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years*, Kentucky, 1984, pp. 10-12, 83-6, 110-5; Reynolds, op. cit., pp. 175-6; Riste, O., (ed.), *Western Security: The Formative Years. European and Atlantic Defence, 1947-1953*, New York, 1985; Young, J.W., *Britain France and the Unity of Europe, 1945-51*, pp. 105; Young, op. cit., pp. 142-8 and 153-6.

<sup>2</sup>. FO 371/68067/AN1196/1195/45, 18-3-1948, minute by Roberts to Sargent, 14-3-1948; minute by McNeil to the Prime Minister, 16-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1296/1195/45, 23-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3208, Kirkpatrick to Washington, 24-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1315/1195/45, 25-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1430, Washington to FO, 24-3-1948; top secret, telegram, no. 3384, FO to Washington, 25-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1325/1195/45, 26-3-1948, telegram, no. 1461, Bevin to Inverchapel, 29-3-1948.



create a framework that would engage America in the peacetime military planning of Western Europe and prevent it slipping back to a policy of isolationism again.<sup>3</sup> British anxieties about America retreating once more into isolationism reflected the former's experiences of the policy constraints American isolationism had imposed during the inter-war years and of fighting alone for nearly two years before the US decided to throw its lot in with Britain against the Axis. Thus, for the British government, the only long-term solution to the security problem facing Western Europe was for America to accept explicit and clear obligations regarding its defence.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Pursuit for an American Commitment**

Up to now, however, the British government had failed to convince the Truman Administration to take a decision and accept an unambiguous and binding alliance with Western Europe. Even after the irretrievable breakdown of the Council of Foreign Ministers conference in London in December 1947, when Bevin approached George C. Marshall, the American Secretary of State, on 17 December 1947 to suggest once again the creation of an alliance with America, Marshall was not prepared to be drawn.<sup>5</sup> Four days after his 'Western Union' speech, Bevin tested the waters with Robert Lovett, the US Under-Secretary of State, to see if the Americans would be willing to underwrite the defence of the 'Western Union'. Lovett exclaimed that this was nothing less than the creation of a military alliance for which America was being asked to

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<sup>3</sup>. FO 371/73079/Z8713/2307/72, 27-10-1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar, Minister at the British Embassy in Washington, to Kirkpatrick, 26-10-1948.

<sup>4</sup>. FO 371/73069/Z3941/2307/72, 10-5-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 5318, FO to Washington, 15-5-1948.

<sup>5</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., p. 499; FO 371/67674/Z11010/25/17, minute, record of conversation between Bevin and Bidault, 17-12-1947.

provide the 'concrete' before it had seen any 'blue-prints'.<sup>6</sup>

However, anxieties about Soviet intentions intensified after the Czech coup of February 1948. Along with the 'Clay warning' of 5 March, acute concern about the outcome of the Italian election and Soviet pressure on Finland and Norway, a window opened for Bevin to raise, more plausibly, the issue of creating an Atlantic defensive alliance.<sup>7</sup> On 26 February, he met Douglas and seized the opportunity to elaborate on his concerns about Western European security. He told Douglas emphatically that his main concern was that inaction on the part of Britain and America would impair the confidence of Western European countries who were now under Soviet pressure. For him, the only solution was for the West to be seen to be taking steps to prevent another Czechoslovakia. The best way to do so was to evolve a joint Western military strategy.<sup>8</sup>

By painting an emotive, even alarmist picture of the predicament of Western Europe Bevin hoped to elicit a positive American response. He warned that the Russians 'might ... establish themselves on the Pyrenees in the next three months' if the West did not 'take effective action now' and that by April they would have consolidated enough to embark on further expansion.<sup>9</sup> Bevin centred his argument around the potential outcome of the Italian election and the possibility of internal subversion in Italy, an issue that he knew was close to American hearts. He was aware also of America's deep-seated concerns

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<sup>6</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, p. 13; Cook, op. cit., pp. 117-8; Bullock, op. cit., p. 522.

<sup>7</sup>. Clay, L. D., *Decision in Germany*, London, 1950, pp. 354-5; Bullock, op. cit., p. 501; Cook, op. cit., p. 121; Ambrose, op. cit., p. 96; Yergin, op. cit., p. 351; FO 371/73069/Z2642/2307/22, 30-3-1948, top secret, minute by Roberts, record of discussion between Bevin and Douglas, 26-2-1948;

<sup>8</sup>. Ibid; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 31-33; Bullock, op. cit., pp. 255-6.

<sup>9</sup>. Ibid.

about the political situation in Italy generally, so he used Italy as an additional bait to lure the Truman Administration into pledging itself to the defence of non-Communist Europe. He described Italy as 'the immediate danger spot', because the PCI had the means to deploy against De Gasperi's government the same tactics that had been employed by the Czech communists to take power in Prague. He warned that the PCI would deploy 'established armed cells' from factories and thus immobilize the Italian army.<sup>10</sup> He went so far as to suggest the use of military force by the US and the UK in the event that the Italian government showed signs of being unable to control its armed and security forces fully. He concluded by proposing to Douglas the speedy opening of discussions between the Americans, the British, the Benelux countries, the French and the Italians.<sup>11</sup>

Ambassador Douglas shared Bevin's pessimistic assessment of the situation in Italy. The Russians, he believed, would do anything they could to absorb Italy into their sphere of influence. Bevin regarded his meeting with Douglas as a success. He believed that he had convinced him of the merits of his arguments and he boasted that he had 'put into Douglas's mind the idea of a permanent consultative body in Washington'.<sup>12</sup> On 12 March 1948, Marshall responded by offering Bevin the prospect of commencing joint discussions with the US later that month.<sup>13</sup>

In the meanwhile, on 17 March 1948, Britain, France and the Benelux signed the Treaty of Brussels. This was the culmination of Bevin's long held ambition

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<sup>10</sup>. Ibid.; Warner, G., 'Italy and the Powers, 1943-49', p. 55.

<sup>11</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., pp. 255-6.

<sup>12</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 48, 52, and 419-50.

of creating a British led force that would ensure the continuation of British power in a world rapidly crystallizing into a bipolar system. At the same time, the Treaty was an attempt to entice America to pledge itself to defend Europe in the face of a seemingly all-powerful Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup> Washington's initial response proved to be, on the surface at least, disappointingly non-committal. President Truman's declaration on the day of the signing of the Brussels Treaty that: 'I am sure that the determination of the free countries of Europe to protect themselves will be matched by an equal determination on our part to help them do so', was merely a holding statement until the Presidential elections were over. It offered nothing which could encourage opposition by isolationists and whilst keeping the door open to the Europeans, it gave no signal of an unwavering commitment.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, the road to Washington, later that same month, was an uncertain and uncharted one for Sir Gladwyn Jebb and General Leslie Hollis, the British representatives. The so-called the Pentagon Talks among the US, Britain and Canada took place in Washington. At these talks no firm decisions were taken despite the tangible degree of consensus reached by the participants.<sup>16</sup> The objective for the British delegation had been to explore opportunities and to

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<sup>14</sup>. Petersen, N., 'Who Pulled Whom and How Much? Britain, the United States and the Making of the North Atlantic Treaty', *Millenium*, Vol., XI, 1982, p. 251; Dockrill, and Young, op. cit.; Kent, *Britain's Imperial Strategy*, op. cit.; Kent, J., 'The British Empire and the Origins of the Cold War', 165-83; Warner, G., 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', in Ovendale, R., (ed) *The Foreign Policy of the Labour Governments, 1945-1951*, Leicester, 1984; Young, J.W., *Britain, France and the Unity of Europe, 1945-51*, Leicester, 1984; Young, J.W., *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992*, London, 1993.

<sup>15</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 54-5; Ambrose, op. cit., p. 96; Feis, op. cit., p. 299-300; Yergin, op. cit., p. 354; Petersen, op. cit., p. 100.

<sup>16</sup>. Wiebes, C., and Zeeman, B., 'The Pentagon Negotiations March 1948: the Launching of the North Atlantic Treaty', *International Affairs*, 1983, pp. 361-3; Best, op. cit., p. 136; Reid, E., *Time of Fear and Hope: The Making of the North Atlantic Treaty, 1947-49*, Toronto, 1977, pp. 284-5.

ascertain how far the Americans were prepared to become involved in a Collective Defence Agreement that would guarantee the security of Western Europe. The delegation came away cautiously optimistic that the Truman Administration appeared not to be averse to the idea of concluding a pact, but that it still felt constrained by Congress, especially since 1948 was a year of Presidential elections in the US.<sup>17</sup>

At the Pentagon Talks, Italy's potential relationship with Western European security arrangements was raised only tentatively. Everyone involved knew that no real discussion on Italy could take place prior the Italian election on 18 April 1948.<sup>18</sup> The Foreign Office adopted the view that although Italian inclusion in Western European security arrangements was neither necessary nor practicable, it would not reject the idea out of hand.<sup>19</sup> The British government itself was not clear on exactly what role a disarmed Italy should or, indeed, could perform in the undertaking of binding treaty obligations, some of which would probably require the revision of the recently signed Italian Peace Treaty nor even, if membership in an Atlantic regional security system was appropriate for Italy. There were many factors that made Italy less than an ideal candidate for such a system. For Britain, the proposed Atlantic Pact was to form only one first step to the creation of a system of defensive treaties that would not only safeguard the defence of the free world but would also bolster

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<sup>17</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>. FO 371/68068A/AN13651195/45, 31-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1514, Washington to FO, 30-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1400/1195/45, 31-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1528, Jebb for Kirkpatrick, 30-3-1948.

<sup>19</sup>. FO 371/68067/AN1276/1195/45, 23-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1371, Inverchapel to FO, 22-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1296/1195/45, 24-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3208, FO to Washington, 24-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1315/1195/45, 25-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1430, Washington to FO, 24-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1325/1195/45, 26-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3466, Inverchapel to Bevin, 29-3-1948.

Britain's global position.<sup>20</sup> In view of these plans it made sense for Britain to support an Atlantic treaty with a limited and carefully defined territorial scope which would supplement and not put at jeopardy British plans for the creation of a worldwide security system of pacts. Inclusion of Italy in the Atlantic agreement would make it over-extensive in territorial terms and went against the grain of the British preference for a territorially limited pact. British deliberations focused, thus, on three issues. First, there was the question of Italy's value as a potential ally, second the question of Italy's alliance role, in view of the disarmament clauses of the Peace Treaty, and third, the aptness of Italian membership to either the Western Union or to NATO.<sup>21</sup>

The Foreign Office regarded the creation of such a pact particularly advantageous for Britain. Primarily, it was seen as a means of maintaining Britain's role as a major power whilst at the same time safeguarding British interests in Southern Europe and the Middle East and enabling it to defend these areas.<sup>22</sup> Italy's geo-strategic position made it vitally important for the defence of key British strategic interests such as maintaining the Mediterranean lines of communications and consequently for the defence of the Middle East and the protection of Greece and Turkey. British statesmen, thus, regarded Italy as a necessary member of such a defensive organization. Moreover, because British military planners regarded it as essentially a

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<sup>20</sup>. CAB 128/14, CM(48)19 Conclusions, confidential, Annex, 5-5-1948; FO 371/71458/N3001/3001/63, 15-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 2768, FO to Washington, 10-3-1948; *ibid.*, N3003/3001/63, 15-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 727, Sargent to Bevin, 13-3-1948.

<sup>21</sup>. FO 371/68067/AN1315/1195/45, 25- 3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3384, Bevin to Inverchapel, 24-3-1948.

<sup>22</sup>. *Ibid.*; DEFE 4/11, COS(48)39th meeting, 17-3-48; DEFE 5/10, COS(48)56(O), 16-3-48; DEFE 5/10, COS(48)49(O), 5-3-48; DEFE 4/14, confidential, Annex, COS(48)90th meeting, 30-6-48.

Mediterranean and not a Western European country,<sup>23</sup> it was believed that inclusion in a Mediterranean regional security system could provide a more propitious security arrangement for Italy.<sup>24</sup>

The Canadians, for their part, did not appear enthusiastic about seeing Italy included in the proposed Atlantic alliance. The Americans suggested that they, the British and the French should make an approach through diplomatic channels to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and, when the Italian elections were out of the way, to Italy to find out if these countries were prepared to accede to the Five Power treaty and to enter into negotiations for the North Atlantic Defence Agreement.<sup>25</sup> If their responses were favourable, they would be invited to participate at a conference on the drafting of a 'North Atlantic Treaty'.<sup>26</sup> Eventually, it was decided to approach the aforementioned countries with the view to joining the North Atlantic treaty in the first instance and only later in connection with the Brussels Pact. This course of action met with the approval of the British government.<sup>27</sup>

Still, at this stage, Britain had not yet come to any firm ideas about Italy. The best way to describe the British attitude, at this stage, was agnosticism laden with profound doubts. The British government was simply pondering which of

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<sup>23</sup>. DEFE 6/5, top secret, JP(48)15 Final, 18-2-48; *ibid.*, top secret, JP(48)28(S) Final, 7-3-48.

<sup>24</sup>. *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>. Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-34.

<sup>26</sup>. FO 371/73069/Z3650/2307/72, 30-4-1948, top secret, Annex: A, memorandum by Jebb: Pentagon Talks, 5-4-1948; FO 371/73071/Z5174/2307/72, 25-6-1948, top secret, Annex, 'Pentagon Programme', undated.

<sup>27</sup>. *Ibid.*

these elaborate security arrangements was the most apt for Italian defence.<sup>28</sup> At this stage, the Foreign Office was not opposed to Italy's inclusion *a priori*. It did foresee difficulties however, arising out of Italy's colonial aspirations and Italian desires to see an early revision of the limitations imposed on the country by the Peace Treaty.<sup>29</sup>

After the Pentagon Talks, a period of American vacillation began which frustrated the British government and left it with little time to explore any other issues apart from deciphering American intentions. What was of the utmost importance for British foreign policy-makers at this stage, was to ensure American participation in a regional defensive system that would also include Canada and the principal Western European states. This aim took precedence over other important issues such as the shape, form and territorial scope of the alliance.<sup>30</sup> By May 1948, the divisions within the Truman Administration between John D. Hickerson, the Director of the Office of European Affairs of the State Department, who favoured American involvement in a military alliance that included certain Western European countries and George F. Kennan, the head of the Policy Planning Staff (PPS) and State Department Counsellor, Charles Bohlen against such an undertaking became glaringly

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<sup>28</sup>. DEFE 4/5, JP(48)28 Final, limited circulation, 17-3-1948; FO 371/73071/Z5174/2307, 25-6-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 6988, FO to Washington, 28-6-1948.

<sup>29</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73069/Z3941/2307/72, 10-5-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 5318, FO to Washington, 15-5-1948.

<sup>30</sup>. FO 371/73071/Z5174/2307, 25-6-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 6988, FO to Washington, 28-6-1948; Petersen, op. cit., pp. 102-3.



obvious.<sup>31</sup> At one moment, British officials and politicians would be subjected to gloomy and pessimistic comments on the probability of America ever entering into a military alliance with Western Europe and at the next, they would be the recipients of upbeat and encouraging messages. Bohlen, and Kennan, were the merchants of gloom and doom.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, Hickerson and his deputy, Theodore C. Achilles, would approach the British Embassy in Washington with news that everything was going according to plan, that a Senatorial Resolution was in the process of being drafted which would include a declaration in favour of a pact or pacts under Article 51 of the UN charter.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>. Ibid., p. 96; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 6-7, 9-10 and 225-28; Kennan, G.F., *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, London, 1968, pp. 406-14; Bohlen, C., *Witness to History, 1929-69*, New York, 1969, p. 175; Ludenstad, G., *Empire by Invitation? The United States and Western Europe, 1945-52*, SHAFR Newsletter, no. 15, 1984, p. 8.; Folly, M.H., 'Breaking the Vicious Circle: Britain, the United States and the Genesis of the North Atlantic Treaty', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 12, 1988, p. 73; Cook, op. cit., pp.115-6; Gaddis, J.L., *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, Oxford, 1982; Smith, E.T., *The United States, Italy and NATO, 1947-52*, pp. 78-80; Yergin, op. cit., pp. 363 and 388-90; Miscamble, op. cit., pp. 116-140. Kennan and Bohlen shared the same views on the issue of European security and the role America had to assume towards it. Kennan believed that the most appropriate action for the US was to give practical military support to the Western European countries by supplying them with the war materials they lacked to remedy their deficiencies. A senatorial resolution would back up that policy which in Kennan's mind would prove to be much more effective than any Atlantic arrangement. He also believed that such a policy would be a more convenient option electorally for the Truman Administration to follow as it would not arouse traditional American feelings against entering formal alliances. Bohlen's criticisms stemmed from his expertise in Soviet affairs that led him to believe that the proposed alliance would cause 'undue provocation to the Soviets, that it was 'too extensive' and contradictory in its objectives. The Washington Embassy soon came to the conclusion that Bohlen was more amenable to the idea of a North Atlantic Pact than Kennan was ever likely to be.

<sup>32</sup>. FO 371/73069/Z4188/2307/72, 18-5-1948, top secret, letter, Inverchapel to Sargent, 5-5-1948; *ibid.*, Z4187/2307/72, 18-5-1948, minute by Jebb to Bevin and Kirkpatrick, 11-5-1948; FO 371/Z4269/2307/72, 21-5-1948, top secret, minute by Balfour, 4-5-1948.

<sup>33</sup>. FO 371/73069/Z3941/2307/72, 10-5-48, top secret, telegram, no. 2166, Balfour to Jebb, 7-5-1948; Miscamble, op. cit., p. 117; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 9-12 and 59-75.

Exasperation and consternation led Sargent, Kirkpatrick and Jebb to conclude that the British government ought to direct all its efforts towards converting Marshall to the point of view that the only way to secure the West and to guard against the possibility of a war breaking out due to a Soviet miscalculation was for the US to enter into a regional defence system with the main Western European countries.<sup>34</sup> Once again the issue of Italian inclusion was used as a bait to entice Marshall into taking the plunge.<sup>35</sup>

By early June 1948, the irritation caused by mixed American messages and non-committal attitudes became palpable in London.<sup>36</sup> Bevin was concerned that the constant shifts of American foreign policy and Britain's attempts to accommodate them, could offer the Soviets a propaganda coup by giving them the opportunity to create the impression that Britain had been reduced to the status of a vassal state. Thus, he was adamant 'to avoid the appearance of American domination and unfortunate reactions here and elsewhere'. Bevin instructed Sir Oliver Franks, the British Ambassador to the United States, to pass on his concerns to Marshall undiluted and 'in the language [he had] used'.<sup>37</sup>

Uncertainty and despondency were lifted as soon as the impact of the Berlin

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<sup>34</sup>. Ibid., minutes by Sargent, 11-5-1948 and Kirkpatrick, 11-5-1948; *ibid.*, Z4187/2307/72, 18-5-1948, minutes, by Jebb 12-5-1948 and Kirkpatrick, 11-5-1948 and 12-5-1948.

<sup>35</sup>. Ibid., Z3941/2307/72, 10-5-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 5318, FO to Washington, 15-5-1948.

<sup>36</sup>. FO 371/73071/Z4754/2307/72, 10-6-1948, top secret, minute by Bevin, 7-6-1948; *ibid.*, Z4883/2307, 15-6-1948, minutes by Jebb and Kirkpatrick, 16-6-1948; *ibid.*, Z5024/2307/72, 21-6-1948, minute by Jebb, 22-6-1948.

<sup>37</sup>. FO 371/73070/Z4674/2307, 7-6-1948, top secret, letter, Bevin to Franks, 3-6-1948.

Blockade on the American body politic became evident.<sup>38</sup> The adoption of the Vandenberg resolution opened the road for America to accede to defensive alliances with Western European democracies and Canada and thus paved the way to the Washington Exploratory Talks on Security (WET).<sup>39</sup>

### **Britain, the Definition of the Territorial Scope of the North Atlantic Treaty and Italy**

In view of these developments, the Five Powers began to prepare for the forthcoming negotiations in earnest. They drew up a draft directive aimed at a common negotiating position on the territorial scope of the prospective treaty. It was agreed, *a priori* that the main aim of the Five was to obtain American adherence to a treaty on Western European defence.<sup>40</sup> As far as Italy was concerned the Brussels Treaty Organization (BTO) powers had to consider two alternatives; either that Italy should join the BTO which was America's preferred option or that it should accede to an Atlantic arrangement. At no stage of the process was Italy viewed as a 'nucleus' country. Due to its Mediterranean character, it was assessed as a 'flank' for the defence of Europe. The consultation process focused on the essence of the relationship of the 'nucleus' i.e. the countries invited to participate in the Washington Talks with the so-called 'flanks' i.e., the peripheral European countries.<sup>41</sup> Inevitably,

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<sup>38</sup>. For the significance of the Vandenberg Resolution see Hudson, D.J., 'Vandenberg Reconsidered: Senate Resolution 239 and American Foreign Policy', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 1, 1977, pp. 46-63, passim; Divine, R.A., *Foreign Policy and the US Presidential Elections, 1940-48*, New York, 1974, pp. 192-4; For the impact of the Berlin Blockade on American foreign policy see Harrington, D., 'The Berlin Blockade Revisited', in the *International History Review*, Vol. VI, part I, 1984, pp. 89-112, passim; Cook, op. cit., 161-8 and 171-4; Ambrose, S.E., *Rise to Globalism*, Baltimore, 1985, p. 101.

<sup>39</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 135-6 and 141.

<sup>40</sup>. FO 371/73070/Z4438/2307/72, 28-5-1948, top secret, MC FP(48)1, 12-6-1948; FO 371/73072/Z5454/2307/72, 5-7-1948, top secret, memorandum, by Sargent, 2-7-1948.

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid.

Italy's future relationship with the system was always linked with that of the Scandinavian countries. Italy formed the so-called 'Southern flank', and Scandinavia the 'Northern flank'.<sup>42</sup> The Scandinavian countries however, were quickly to emerge as being more important strategically than Italy due to the Soviet Notes of 1948 which had transformed them, in the perception of the West, to being in the 'firing line'.<sup>43</sup>

Two problems arose with the inclusion of 'flank' countries to the alliance. First, the Five Powers estimated that neither they, nor the Americans, nor the Canadians possessed the means to protect the 'flanks' effectively.<sup>44</sup> Second, there was anxiety among the Brussels Powers that the 'flanks', in their attempts to protect themselves, could eschew the policy of the 'nucleus' by calling for the adoption of policies that would result in spreading the resources of the alliance too thinly.<sup>45</sup>

On a more basic level and quite aside from these deliberations, it transpired quickly that some of the Five preferred to see Italy excluded from the BTO because they wanted a slower growth for the organization than did the

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<sup>42</sup>. FO 371/73069/Z3650/2307/72, 30-4-1948, top secret, Annex: A, memorandum by Jebb: Pentagon Talks, 5-4-1948; FO 371/73071/Z5174/2307/72, 25-6-1948, top secret, Annex, Pentagon Talks, undated.

<sup>43</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., p. 528; Cook, op. cit., pp. 125, 130, and 214-6; Luderstad, G., *America, Scandinavia and the Cold War, 1945-49*, New York, 1980; Petersen, op. cit., pp. 102; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 51-2.

<sup>44</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6238/2307/72, 2-8-1948, top secret, memorandum by Jebb, 28-7-1948.

<sup>45</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6238/2307/72, 2-8-1948, memorandum by Jebb, 28-7-1948.

Americans.<sup>46</sup> As far as NATO was concerned, both the Dutch and the Belgian governments were opposed to Italy's participation as a founding member. The French had concluded that a restricted alliance would better serve Western European security as it would allow military resources to be more effectively concentrated. Thus, they too expressed apprehension about Italy joining at this stage.<sup>47</sup> Jean Chauvel, the Secretary-General of the Quai d' Orsay, however, had indicated to both Hoyer-Millar, the Minister at the British Embassy in Washington, and Jebb that the newly sworn-in French government had not had the time to come to any firm policy decision on the matter and this allowed some flexibility in the French position.<sup>48</sup> The Five decided unanimously that, at this stage, their preference lay with a limited, territorially well-defined treaty, which meant that Italy would probably have to be excluded.<sup>49</sup>

When the Washington Exploratory Talks on Security began on 6 July 1948, the territorial scope of the pact was one of the first issues to be considered by the Seven Powers Working Group, made up of the representatives of the US, Britain, Canada, France, and the Benelux. It soon transpired that for the

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<sup>46</sup>. FO 371/73073/Z5640/2307/72, 12-7-1948, top secret, letter, Henderson to Hoyer-Millar, 13-9-1948; minute by J.W. Russell, assistant head of the Western Department, 12-7-1948.

<sup>47</sup>. FO 371/73073/Z5818/2307/72, 17-7-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3498, Franks to FO, 16-7-1948; FO 371/73077/Z7638/2307/72, 22-9-1948, minute by Montague-Brown, 16-9-1948; *ibid.*, Z7637/2307/72, 22-9-1948, secret, FO minute, record of Bevin's discussion with Schuman, 22-9-1948.

<sup>48</sup>. FO 371/73075Z6948/2307/72, 27-8-1948, minutes by Jebb, 23-8-1948, and Kirkpatrick, 27-8-1948; top secret, telegram, no. 4072, Franks to FO, 26-8-1948; top secret, telegram, no. 9666, FO to Washington 30-8-1948; *ibid.*, Z7002/2307/72, 30-8-1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, 20-8-1948.

<sup>49</sup>. FO 371/73070/Z4438/2307/72, 28-5-1948, top secret, MC FP(48)1, 12-6-1948; FO 371/73072/Z5454/2307/72, 5-7-1948, top secret, memorandum, by Sargent, 2-7-1948; *ibid.*, Z5613/2307/72, 10-7-1948, top secret, Annex, British record of the Permanent Commission of the BTO, 2nd meeting, 6-7-1948.

American negotiators, the litmus test for including European states outside the Brussels Powers set-up, was based on the importance of each country to American national security. This approach could convince Congress to ratify the Treaty after its conclusion.<sup>50</sup> To the surprise of the British, Italy was not mentioned in the initial American geographical boundary projections for the Treaty which included countries such as Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Eire, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Portugal and even Western Germany and Austria.<sup>51</sup> Italy was not even discussed in the context of the BTO. The British found this surprising, especially since the Foreign Office had estimated that Italy's accession to the Treaty represented the 'most difficult problem of all' as far as the territorial scope was concerned and because mention was made of the eventual inclusion of Austria and Western Germany.<sup>52</sup> The only conclusion which could be drawn was that not much should be read into this omission as the debate had not as yet started in earnest.<sup>53</sup>

The Foreign Office proved right. It soon emerged that the issue and consequences of Italy's inclusion in an Atlantic system was vexing the minds of American policy-makers and creating disagreements and splits within the Truman Administration. The inclusionists were headed by Hickerson and Achilles and the anti-inclusionists by Kennan.<sup>54</sup> Hickerson, while freely

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<sup>50</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6123/2307/72, 28-7-48, Summary of Attitudes of the Countries Taking Part in the Washington Security Talks as shown during the first week of the discussions, British Embassy, Washington, 13-7-1948.

<sup>51</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6140/2307/72, 28-7-1948, memorandum, by Jebb for Bevin, 28-7-1948; FO 371/73073/Z5818/2307, 17-7-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 4398, Franks to FO, 16-7-1948.

<sup>54</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6238/2307/72, 2-8-1948, memorandum by Jebb, 28-7-1948; Miscamble, op. cit., p. 132; Smith, op. cit., pp. 78-81.

admitting that Italy would be more of a liability than an asset from the military point of view in either the Brussels Treaty or in the Atlantic System, all the same, regarded Italian inclusion as of the utmost importance for purely political considerations.<sup>55</sup> His assessment was that if Italy was left out it would have a 'most unfortunate' effect on its internal security because this would demoralize the Italian Government and its pro-western political forces.<sup>56</sup> Such a situation, he felt, would leave an isolated Italy easy prey for the designs of the USSR and would increase the likelihood of communist or communist-sympathising governments in Italy.<sup>57</sup>

Initially, Hickerson had a free run as Kennan was absent in the Far East and subsequently away recovering from a lengthy illness.<sup>58</sup> As soon as Kennan was on his feet again however, he raised serious objections to the creation of a military alliance in general and Italian inclusion in particular. He felt that the inclusion of a non-North Atlantic country would dilute the character of the proposed alliance and that it would jeopardize the success of the ERP by polarizing the situation in Europe and by diverting funds from economic to military aid. If a military alliance had to be created at all, Kennan believed that it should be limited strictly to North Atlantic countries.<sup>59</sup> Truman and Lovett,

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<sup>55</sup>. FO 371/73078/Z8215/2307/72, 12-10-1948, top secret, letter Hoyer-Millar to Kirkpatrick, 7-10-1948; FO 371/73073/Z5640/2307, 12-7-1948, minute by Russell, 12-7-1948; Smith, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>56</sup>. FO 371/73075/Z6948/2307/72, 27/8/48, top secret, telegram, no. 4072, Franks to FO, 26-8-1948; Smith, op. cit., p. 81-3; Reid, op. cit., pp. 202-3 and 210-3.

<sup>57</sup>. Ibid.; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 237-48; Miscamble, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>58</sup>. Kennan, op. cit., pp. 404.

<sup>59</sup>. Miscamble, op. cit., p. 132.

too, appeared to be 'half-hearted' about Italian inclusion.<sup>60</sup> Franks nevertheless reported that, despite these splits, the State Department could be expected eventually to be a strong advocate of Italian inclusion.<sup>61</sup>

During the opening stages of the Washington Exploratory Talks it emerged that the British government had not arrived at a firm position on potential Italian inclusion and that many trains of thought could be discerned. Franks was of the opinion that Italy should be associated with a Mediterranean defensive arrangement alongside Greece and Turkey and not with an Atlantic system.<sup>62</sup> Gladwyn Jebb, the British representative at the Talks, in contrast, had come to the conclusion that Italian inclusion was preferable to its exclusion for both political and cultural reasons.<sup>63</sup> For him the fact that Italy was not a Northern Atlantic country geographically, was irrelevant. As he asserted passionately, Italy was 'socially, economically, politically .....and geographically' a Western European country and not an 'Eastern European or Middle Eastern country'.<sup>64</sup> He was also not impressed by the possibility of a Mediterranean arrangement for Italy because he felt that Italian security and defence could not be safeguarded realistically if Italy was left out of the 'Atlantic arrangement'. He had also formed the opinion that such a scheme would be simply unworkable

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<sup>60</sup>. FO 371/73075/Z7002/2307/72, 30/8/1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar, Washington to Jebb, FO, 20-8-1948; Donovan, R.J., *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1949-53*, London, 1982, p. 49.

<sup>61</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z633/3207/72, 3-8-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3803, Franks to Jebb, 5-8-1948.

<sup>62</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6142/2307/72, 28-7-1948, memorandum, by Jebb for Bevin, 28-7-1948; FO 371/73073/Z5818/2307, 17-7-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3498, Franks to FO, 16-7-1948.

<sup>63</sup>. Ibid; FO 371/73074/Z6238/2307/72, 2-8-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3687, Franks to FO, 28-7-1948; top secret, telegram, no. 8245, FO to Washington, 27-7-1948; top secret, memorandum by Jebb, 22-7-1948; minutes by Jebb, 29-7-1948 and Russell, 28-7-1948.

<sup>64</sup>. Ibid.



because the Mediterranean system would require American support as well as an Italian willingness to associate itself with Greece, Turkey, Great Britain, France and Middle Eastern countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and eventually Israel, in a Mediterranean or Middle Eastern pact.<sup>65</sup> He astutely pointed out that Italy's size would result in its dominating the other proposed member countries and that this would cause resentment because Greece, Turkey and the Arab League already had poor relations with Italy. His argument was further supported by the Permanent Council of the BTO which had reached a similar conclusion.<sup>66</sup>

Jebb was not isolated in his thinking. In late August, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick prepared a memorandum for Bevin on the pros and cons of Italian inclusion, in which he concluded that Italy ought to be included.<sup>67</sup> In fact, he went as far as to recommend that the British representative at the Washington Security Talks should argue in favour of Italian inclusion. Kirkpatrick's conclusions were based on the firm belief that, on balance, Italian exclusion would create many more problems than those anticipated by inclusion.<sup>68</sup> He advised that exclusion would produce a sense of grievance and demoralization which would weaken Italy's resolve to defend itself. He was also critical of offering protection through a Mediterranean Pact system because, first, such a scheme could not be put in place quickly enough and second, the formation of a Mediterranean Pact able to afford Italy's defence would surely mean an over-extension of resources. Kirkpatrick also predicted accurately that Italy would not be

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<sup>65</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6142/2307/72, 28-7-1948, memorandum, by Jebb for Bevin, 28-7-1948.

<sup>66</sup>. Ibid., Z6238/2307/72, 2-8-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3687, Franks to FO, 28-7-1948.

<sup>67</sup>. FO 371/73075/Z6948/2307/72, 1-9-1948, memorandum by Kirkpatrick, 27-8-1948.

<sup>68</sup>. Ibid.

prepared to join the BTO if this meant that she would be barred from joining an American backed alliance. Similarly, he also anticipated correctly that the French would ultimately prefer to see Italy in the Atlantic Pact rather than in the Brussels Treaty.<sup>69</sup> Kirkpatrick and Jebb were not alone in arriving at this conclusion. Bevin, at this time, also saw the merit of Italian inclusion.<sup>70</sup>

The British military, however, had arrived at substantially different conclusions to those of the Foreign Office. The Chiefs of Staff conceded that although it would be an advantage for a western defence arrangement to include a 'strong' Italy because it would secure the southern flank of the Western Union and protect the lines of communication in the Mediterranean, especially, as the Foggia airfields were an important strategic air base for the defence of the Middle East,<sup>71</sup> the fact remained that at present Italy was too weak to be included. Its ability to play a valuable role in the alliance had not only been curtailed by the limitations the Peace Treaty had imposed on it but also because of the parlous state of its armed forces. Since there was no chance of holding either the Italian mainland or Sicily against a large scale enemy attack, the Chiefs of Staff held that they should not enter into any undertakings of direct military assistance to Italy in the event of war during 1951-52.<sup>72</sup> British

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<sup>69</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>. FO 371/73075/Z6948/2307/72, 27-8-1948, memorandum: 'Atlantic Pact' by Kirkpatrick, 27-8-1948; minute by Bevin, undated; *ibid.*, Z7001/2307/72, 30-8-1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar, to Jebb, 19-8-1948.

<sup>71</sup>. DEFE 6/6, top secret, JP(48)92 (Final), 4-9-48; DEFE 5/12, top secret, COS(48)200(O), 8-9-48; DEFE 6/7, JP(49)139 (Final) (Revise), 12-3-49; CAB 131/9, top secret, DO(49)88, Annex, 'Place of Italy in Allied Strategy', 24-12-1948, approved at COS(49)42nd meeting, 15-3-1949; DEFE 4/20, top secret, COS(49)42nd meeting, 15-3-1949; FO 371/79346/Z4359/10535/22, 16-6-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 188, Mallet to Bevin, 16-6-1949; CAB 131/9, top secret, DO(50)84, Annex, 13-10-1950.

<sup>72</sup>. *Ibid.*; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)141 (Final), approved by the COS in its first meeting in 1949, 3-1-1949; DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49)1st meeting, 3-1-1949.

military strategic thinking on Mediterranean defence operated along the following lines. Sea communications in the area had to be kept open for the initial deployment period as well as for the maintenance of the forces in the Middle East. The main danger was thought to come from submarines, air attacks and mines. Although the threat of surface attacks on shipping could not be discounted totally, they were deemed a lesser risk. Future strategy relied on keeping control through adequate sea and air forces and suitable bases. In this scenario it followed that mainland Italy was not critical for the defence of the Mediterranean and thus was expendable.<sup>73</sup>

In essence, the British military saw Italy as having no strategic value for the defence of Western Europe because of its vulnerability. They anticipated that a Soviet attack on Italy would be launched mainly through Yugoslavia and followed by a subsidiary attack through Austria.<sup>74</sup> Northern Italy would then fall within D+35 days from the moment an attack had occurred, the toe of Italy within D+75 days and Sicily within D+100 days. It was exactly this time lag that made the Chiefs of Staff so unperturbed about the possibility of Italy falling into hostile hands because delays of this kind meant that the enemy could not threaten Mediterranean sea communications for at least four to five months from the outbreak of war.<sup>75</sup>

British military planners, also, calculated that for Italy to withstand a Soviet attack it would have to become a recipient of 'considerable military

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<sup>73</sup>. CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)61, 14-9-1948.

<sup>74</sup>. Ibid.; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171 (Final), 16-1-1950.

<sup>75</sup>. DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)141 (Final), approved by the COS in its first meeting in 1949, 3-1-1949; DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49)1st meeting, 3-1-1949; CAB 131/9, top secret, DO(49)88, Annex, Place of Italy, 24-12-1948.

assistance'.<sup>76</sup> It would also require the deployment of such numbers of allied forces that an effective defence and eventual success in other theatres would be jeopardized.<sup>77</sup> The Chiefs of Staff proclaimed that Britain itself could not spare the forces needed for the defence of Italy and that they had no intention of fighting to save it from a Soviet attack.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, such a degree of military assistance in materiel and personnel, the Chiefs of Staff warned, would eventually prove embarrassing for the West for three reasons. First, because it would contravene the military restrictions imposed by the Peace Treaty. Second, because the Soviets could reap a real propaganda bonus by presenting Italian inclusion as an attempt by the West to enter into 'intrigue' with an 'ex-enemy'.<sup>79</sup> Finally, because there were only limited supplies of modern armaments. Any assistance given to Italy was bound to be at the expense of the Brussels Powers.<sup>80</sup>

The Defence Committee took all these considerations into account and concluded that the British Government ought to resist any moves which would result in the dispersal of military resources to provide support for essentially indefensible areas such as Italy.<sup>81</sup> These conclusions were firmed up by the recommendations of the Military Committee of the BTO, which when asked by

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<sup>76</sup>. DEFE 5/12, top secret, COS(48)210(O), 17-9-48; DEFE 4/16, top secret, COS(48)131st meeting, 20-9-1948.

<sup>77</sup>. DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49)1st meeting, 3-1-49.

<sup>78</sup>. DEFE 5/8, top secret, COS(48)140, 28-10-48, memorandum by Montgomery, 22-10-48.

<sup>79</sup>. DEFE 5/12, top secret, COS(48)210(O), 17-9-48; DEFE 4/16, top secret, COS(48)131st meeting, 20-9-48.

<sup>80</sup>. DEFE 5/9, top secret, COS(48)227, Atlantic Pact, Inclusion of Italy, 29-12-1948; FO 371/73081/Z9295/2307/72, top secret, letter by Kirkpatrick to Ministry of Defence, 24-12-48.

<sup>81</sup>. CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)61, 14-9-48.

the Permanent Commission to examine Italy's strategic position in the defence of Western Europe, judged that at this stage Italy was a military liability and that therefore its inclusion in either an Atlantic defensive arrangement or the BTO did not have their support 'under any conditions'.<sup>82</sup>

As time passed, the military's opposition to Italian inclusion hardened. The Chiefs of Staff not only continued to regard Italy as a military liability but also expressed the worry that Italy would use the opportunity of negotiations for its entry to bargain for a revision of the military and colonial clauses of the Peace Treaty.<sup>83</sup> The Chiefs of Staff were deeply concerned that any Italian 'push' for colonial adjustments in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania in their favour would adversely affect British strategic interests in the Mediterranean<sup>84</sup> and would prove to be extremely embarrassing for Britain as Cyrenaica was deemed to be essential to the successful outcome of any war against the Soviet Union.<sup>85</sup> They were adamant that Britain ought to acquire sole trusteeship of the area

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<sup>82</sup>. DEFE 4/16, COS(48)131st meeting, item 7, 20-9-48; DEFE 5/12, COS(48)210(O), 17-9-48; Annex II, COS 1643/23/9/8, letter, Secretary of COS to the Secretary of the delegation of the Military Committee of the Five Powers, 23-9-48; CAB 131/6, DO(48)64, top secret, memorandum by Bevin, 20-9-48.

<sup>83</sup>. DEFE 5/12, top secret, COS(48)210(O), 17-9-48; DEFE 4/16, top secret, COS(48)131st meeting, item 7, 20-9-48.

<sup>84</sup>. DEFE 5/11, top secret, COS(48)97(O), 21-4-48, Future of Italian colonies; *ibid.*, top secret, COS(48)143(O), 1-7-48.

<sup>85</sup>. Aldrich, R., and Coleman, M., 'Britain and the Strategic Air Offensive Against the Soviet Union: the Question of South Asian Air Bases, 1945-49', *History*, Vol. 74, 1989, pp. 408-11; Groom, A.J.R., *British Thinking about Nuclear Weapons*, London, 1974, p. 96; Devereux, D.R., 'The Middle East and Africa in British Global Strategy 1952-56', in Aldrich, R.J., and Hopkins, M. F., (eds), *Intelligence, Defence and Diplomacy: British Policy in the Post-war World*, London, 1994, pp. 170-1; Kelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-228 and 277-307; British strategists had identified Cyrenaica as a potential air base for 'broken-backed' warfare. It was also thought as having symbolic value too as it provided a 'tangible' proof of Britain's resolve to defend the Middle East. It could also hold land forces and above all, it was a symbol of Britain's determination to remain a global power.

and thus resisted any suggestions of its return to Italy.<sup>86</sup> The position of the British military remained unyielding. As they put it, epigrammatically, Italy should “work its passage” - which echoed the Churchillian formulation of 1943.<sup>87</sup>

The recommendations of the military precipitated a change of heart in the Foreign Office. Kirkpatrick and Bevin accepted that it would be a mistake to include Italy in the Treaty under consideration at this time.<sup>88</sup> For Kirkpatrick Italian participation was, at present, ‘difficult and problematic’.<sup>89</sup> Bevin’s own apprehensions stemmed from three considerations. First, the Peace Treaty had rendered Italy incapable of discharging any of the military obligations required by a full member in a defensive alliance.<sup>90</sup> Second, the existence of only limited supplies of modern armaments would mean that any assistance given to Italy was bound to be at the expense of the Brussels Powers.<sup>91</sup> Third,

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<sup>86</sup>. DEFE 6/7, JP(48)112 (Final), 20-10-48, brief used by the FO at a meeting of the Consultative Assembly of the five Powers, 25-10-48.

<sup>87</sup>. DEFE 4/18, top secret, COS(48)167th meeting, Annex, item 3, Italy, 23-11-48; *ibid*, item 1, North Atlantic Pact, 23-11-48; DEFE 5/9, COS(48)171, top secret, letter by Hayter to FO, 22-11-48.

<sup>88</sup>. FO 371/73079/Z8713/2307/72, 27-10-1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Kirkpatrick, 26-10-1948; CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)64, memorandum by Bevin, 20-9-48.

<sup>89</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z8974/203/72, 4-11-48, memorandum by Kirkpatrick, 1-11-1948; CAB 129/30, top secret, CP(48)249, 2-11-1948.

<sup>90</sup>. FO 371/73079/Z837/2307/72, 29-10-1948, top secret, letter no. 910, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 25-10-48.

<sup>91</sup>. DEFE 5/9, top secret, COS(48)227, ‘Atlantic Pact: Inclusion of Italy’, 29-12-1948; FO 371/73081/Z9295/2307/72, top secret, letter by Kirkpatrick to MoD, 24-12-48; FO 371/79346/Z6940/10535/22, 22-10-1949, telegram, no. 1899, confidential, Bevin to Mallet, 21-10-1949. Bevin, pressed on the point erupted angrily saying, ‘What is the use of promising people arms and not delivering them?’ telegram draft dictated by Bevin to Pemberton-Piggott, 21-10-1949.

the inclusion of Italy would impact adversely on Greece and Turkey.<sup>92</sup>

Developments in Washington indicating that America was prepared to contemplate a more territorially flexible arrangement also conspired to reinforce British opposition to Italian inclusion.<sup>93</sup> Bevin believed firmly that the new defensive alliance ought to be regionally restricted and based on military cooperation alone. This is why he was resolutely determined not to include Italy, Greece and Turkey. He feared that their inclusion would destroy the validity to the claim that this was a 'regionally' based system.<sup>94</sup> He also was adamant that the North Atlantic Pact should concern itself with defence matters alone and he did not wish to see its activities spreading into economic, social and cultural matters which were in any case covered by the Treaty of Brussels. The military emphasis of the project also implied that decisions on potential members ought to be taken on strictly military and strategic criteria and not political or cultural ones. Bevin's resistance was directly motivated by two desires, to secure the continuation the BTO and at the same time to ensure that the Soviets would not be able to use the Atlantic Treaty as evidence that the Western democracies were run in the interests of American capitalism.<sup>95</sup>

Bevin believed that there were three alternative options which were more suitable for Italy. The first was for Italy to have her security safeguarded alongside with that of Greece and Turkey, by some kind of unilateral guarantee countersigned by the Atlantic Powers. The second option was for the inclusion

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<sup>92</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>. CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)64, memorandum by Bevin, 20-9-48.

<sup>94</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>. Ibid; CAB 128/13, CM68(48), 4-11-1948; CAB 129/30, top secret, CP(48)249, 2-11-1949; CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)20, 23-2-1948; CAB 128/12, confidential, Annex, CM19(48)19th meeting, 5-3-1949.

of Italy into a non-military organization, the Council of Europe. The third which was more in line with Bevin's world view, envisaged the incorporation of Italy into a Mediterranean regional defence system in which the UK and the US would participate as well.<sup>96</sup> Bevin was determined that the North Atlantic Pact should be followed by a Mediterranean one that would safeguard the security of Southern Europe and the Middle East and would at the same time bolster the British position in the area.<sup>97</sup>

The main problem in establishing a Mediterranean Pact was that Britain and France lacked adequate resources to sustain such a system without American involvement. This was a quandary that the Foreign Office recognized early on. Despite these problems, the idea of creating a Mediterranean Pact alongside a North Atlantic framework was extremely attractive for many in the British government and they therefore made attempts to excite a similar interest in the State Department to this idea.<sup>98</sup> A Mediterranean Pact however, went down like a lead balloon in America. Acheson and the State Department were quick to quash any speculation that the US was prepared to associate itself with any Mediterranean regional defensive system at this stage. They were concerned that if they adopted a favourable attitude towards such a scheme they might well antagonize the Congress unduly at a crucial moment when they needed its cooperation to ratify any American obligations towards the North Atlantic

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<sup>96</sup>. FO 371/73074/Z6142/2307/72, 28-7-1948, FO memorandum for Bevin, 28-7-1948; FO 371/73079/Z837/2307/72, 29-10-1948, top secret, letter no. 910, Kirkpatrick for Bevin to Mallet, 25-10-1948.

<sup>97</sup>. CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)61, 14-9-48.

<sup>98</sup>. DEFE 4/11, top secret, COS(48)39th meeting, 17-3-48; DEFE 5/10, top secret, COS(48)56(O), 16-3-48; DEFE 5/10, top secret, COS(48)49(O), 5-3-48; DEFE 4/14, COS(48)90th meeting, confidential, Annex, 30-6-48; DEFE 5/11, top secret, COS(48)145(O), 2-7-1948.



Pact.<sup>99</sup> As Hoyer-Millar, the Minister at the British Embassy in Washington, wryly put it during the Washington Talks, although he tried to bring up the question of other regional pacts and to peddle Bevin's view of a North Atlantic alliance as the starting point of a worldwide system of defensive regional pacts or even the possibility of forming a Mediterranean Pact accommodating Italy, Greece and Turkey, his approaches were 'never very popular' with either the Americans or other Europeans for that matter.<sup>100</sup>

The Mediterranean Pact idea proved to be an unrealistically grandiose scheme not just because of American attitudes and logistical considerations but also because the Italians had no desire to see themselves dragged into a limited Mediterranean role with weak allies. The Italian government regarded Italy, to all intents and purposes, as a Western European country. The whole *raison d'être* of the Christian Democratic governments of the late 1940s was their pro-Western outlook, the international rehabilitation of Italy and the carving out of a niche for their country in the Western World by participating in international organizations on the basis of equality with other members.<sup>101</sup>

There was also the tangible problem of Italian willingness to adhere to any pacts. The Foreign Office felt that no clear message was coming from the Italian Government indicating a desire to be included into military pacts. This was highlighted by the caution with which the Italians had approached the

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<sup>99</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. IV, p. 69, 172-6, 183 and 215; Ambrose, op. cit., p. 105; Smith, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

<sup>100</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9094/2307/72, 9-11-1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Kirkpatrick, 2-11-1948; CO 537/3316/25030/2, secret, telegram, no. 405, Paris to FO, 18-5-1948.

<sup>101</sup>. ASMAE, AL, *busta*: 1360, *telespresso*, T. 4117, Gallarati Scotti a Sforza, 10-8-1948; *telespresso*, T. 1284, Sforza a Brosio, Gallarati Scotti, Quaroni, Tarchiani, 31-8-1948; Varsori, *De Gasperi, Nenni and Sforza*, p. 110.

Western Union.<sup>102</sup> Hoyer-Millar was told by Count Roberti, the head of the British desk at the Italian Ministry of External Affairs, that even though the Ministry was in favour of Italian association with the 'Western Union', a considerable body of public opinion existed in Italy that was opposed to any move of Italy 'towards the West'.<sup>103</sup> The humiliation and destruction caused by the Second World War and the polarization of the Cold War had made most Italians fearful of the possibility of their country becoming a battleground in the emergent conflict and had turned Italian public opinion overwhelmingly in favour of neutrality. In fact, neutralism was very strong and cut across party affiliations: it included communists and fellow travellers, apolitical people who believed genuinely that Italy could remain neutral in any struggle between Russia and the West and finally, those nationalists who felt that Italy had been badly treated by the West over the colonial issue and the Peace Treaty.<sup>104</sup> Roberti maintained that for as long as this state of affairs persisted it was very difficult for the Italian government to take the initiative, and he added emphatically that 'pressure from any quarter to induce the Italian government to come out in favour of joining the Western Union at the present time would be embarrassing to Rome'.<sup>105</sup> Such assessments were further compounded by the picture which was emerging from Rome. Victor Mallet sent back accounts

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<sup>102</sup>. FO 371/79292/Z851/1011/22, 28-1-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 26, Mallet to Bevin, Quarterly Report, October-December 1948, 22-1-1949.

<sup>103</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9094/2307, 9-11-1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Kirkpatrick, 2-11-1948.

<sup>104</sup>. Vigezzi, B., *La Dimensione Atlantica e Le Relazioni Internazionali nel Dopoguerra, 1947-1949*, Milano, 1987, pp. 46-52; Sforza, C., *Cinque Anni a Palazzo Chigi: La Politica Estera Italiana dal 1947 al 1951*, Rome, 1952, pp. 194-5; Vannicelli, op. cit., pp. 4-7; Varsori, A., 'Italian Diplomacy and Contrasting Perceptions of American Policy after WWII, 1947-1950', *Storia Nordamericana*, Vol. 3, 1986, p. 79; Mammarella, op. cit., pp. 236-7; Ortona, E., 'Italy's Entry into the Atlantic Alliance: The Role of the Italian Embassy in Washington, 1948-49', *NATO Review*, Vol. 29, 1981, pp. 20-1.

<sup>105</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9094/2307, 9-11-1948, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Kirkpatrick, 2-11-1948.

of a vociferous peace movement which the Communists had managed to co-opt during 'monster' demonstrations which took place on 7 November. Mallet's accounts also described an embattled government in which some of its own elements - Giuseppe Dossetti and Giovanni Gronchi the leaders of the Parliamentary left wing of the Christian Democrats, and Dino Del Bo, the representative of the trade union wing of the Party - pressed for the adoption of a neutralist foreign policy.<sup>106</sup>

De Gasperi and Sforza realized that the Washington Exploratory Talks had given rise to new realities that Italian foreign policy would have to accommodate if their country was not to be isolated, but they found themselves in a severe dilemma about how to proceed. Alberto Tarchiani, the Italian Ambassador to the United States, warned that Italy had only one stark choice at this time, either to join an Atlantic alliance or to be left out in the cold alone. His admonitions were tempered by the advice of other ambassadors. From Paris, Pietro Quaroni, the Italian Ambassador to France, urged caution but at the same time he was painfully aware of Italy's limited scope for pursuing a truly neutral policy. He mused, 'today we are as free as Poland...'.<sup>107</sup> The Italian government had no other option but to adopt an equivocal and cautious policy of balance aimed on the one hand at ensuring the speedy international rehabilitation of the country and on the other, at carrying the Italian Parliament and public opinion with it and ensuring that its defence would be guaranteed by the United States formally. If Sforza tried to associate Italy too closely with

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<sup>106</sup>. FO 371/79292/Z851/1011/22, 28-1-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 26, Mallet to Bevin, Quarterly Report, October-December 1948, 22-1-1949; Di Capua, G., *Come l'Italia aderì al Patto Atlantico*, Rome, 1969, pp. 96-100; Ginsborg, op. cit, pp. 157-8.

<sup>107</sup>. ASMAE, AP, busta: 405, *telespresso*, T. 713, 2-6-1948; ibid, AP, busta: 410, *telespressi*, T. 5500 and T. 6858, Tarchiani a Sforza, 6-6-1948 and 12-7-1948.

the West and in particular, with an overtly anti-Soviet military alliance, he risked alienating public opinion and giving the Communists and Socialists the opportunity to whip up and capitalise on neutralist sentiments.<sup>108</sup>

In weighing up these considerations, Sforza developed a two-pronged approach. He attempted to obtain more information on the emerging Atlantic system and he tentatively explored its possibilities.<sup>109</sup> He also chose to further European cooperation by economic means in order to offset Italy's exclusion from the BTO and to mollify neutralist feeling. He proposed that the OEEC should be transformed into a body that would speed European unity. This integrative plan reflected Sforza's domestic and foreign policy concerns, as well as genuine Italian pro-integrationist sentiments and economic priorities and at the same time was intended to avoid the pitfalls of the military entanglements that accession to a defensive alliance would bring with it.<sup>110</sup>

Sforza's proposals may have been met with derision and utter contempt by Bevin and the Foreign Office, but they were also interpreted as reflecting genuine Italian neutralist feelings and the difficulties the Italian government had in entering into any binding military obligations. They led the British government to believe that Italy would not wish to join NATO and that British policy towards Italian inclusion did not need reassessment. This exposed Bevin to Italian complaints that Britain was trying to keep Italy out of any Western alliances, to

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<sup>108</sup>. Ortona op. cit., 20-1; Varsori, A., 'La scelta occidentale dell' Italia, 1948-49', Part I, *Storia delle relazioni internazionali*, Vol. 1, pp. 120-1; FO 371/79292/Z851/1011/22, 28-1-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 26, Mallet to Bevin, Quarterly Report, October-December 1948, 22-1-1949.

<sup>109</sup>. ASMAE, AL, *busta*: 1360, *telespresso*, T. 1284, Sforza a Brosio, Gallarati Scotti, Quaroni, Tarchiani e *allo* Stato Maggiore, 31-8-1948.

<sup>110</sup>. FO 371/73079/Z8739/2307/72, 29-10-1948, top secret, letter, no. 910, Kirkpatrick for Bevin to Mallet, 25-10-48.

which Bevin took strong exception. He intimated to Sir Victor Mallet that he had given a lot of thought about how to incorporate Italy, but his main concern right now was to decide on the proper territorial scope of the Treaty. Even the evidence of growing American support for Italian inclusion failed to curb the serious doubts he had developed by this stage with regards to such inclusion.<sup>111</sup>

Throughout this period, the British government had been the recipient of confused and garbled messages with regards to Italian intentions. These were due to Italian indecision and Sforza's dismissive and uncooperative towards Duke Tommaso Gallarati Scotti which resulted in the Italian Embassy in London not being always fully informed.<sup>112</sup> General Marras went to Germany and conducted discussions with the Americans,<sup>113</sup> but Hoyer-Millar was unable to get any information about the purpose of General Marras' visit from Count Roberti who was usually not a reticent man. The Foreign Office believed that military discussions between the Italians and the Americans had taken place and that Italy's role in the defence of Europe had been discussed as well. General Marras and the American Military *Attaché* in Rome were extremely cagey and tight-lipped about the nature of the visit. The British were also not told of the invitation that General Omar Bradley, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, had issued to General Marras to visit the US.<sup>114</sup> From the

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<sup>111</sup>. FO 371/73079/Z8739/2307/72, 29-10-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 910, Kirkpatrick for Bevin to Mallet, 25-10-48.

<sup>112</sup>. ASMAE, *buste*: 1360 and 405, *passim*; Canavero, A., 'Tommaso Gallarati Scotti and his Role in Italian Foreign Policy after World War II', *Journal of Italian History*, Vol. II, 1979, pp. 32-51, *passim*.

<sup>113</sup>. Ortona, E., *Anni d' America: La Ricostruzione, 1944-1951*, Bologna, 1984; Tarchiani, A., *Dieci Anni Tra Roma e Washington*, Milano, 1955; Vigezzi, B., *op cit.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>114</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9136/2307/72, 10-11-1948, top secret, letter, Jebb to Kirkpatrick, 7-11-1948.

British point of view it appeared as if something had happened behind their backs and they were being deliberately kept in the dark. The Italian Chief of Staff was prepared only to say that he had gone to Germany to review Italian Army officers who were being trained in Germany by the Americans and to discuss the issue of arms standardization. More important and precise information emerged from Colonel Koral, the Turkish Military *Attaché*, who was considered to be the best informed foreign military *attaché* in Rome. He informed the British that according to a close associate of Marras, the General had had discussions in Germany on Italy's role in the event of a future war but that they had been of an exploratory nature and no decisions had been taken.<sup>115</sup>

Count Zoppi, the Secretary General of the Italian Foreign Ministry contributed to the general confusion and succeeded in greatly arousing British suspicions. He had approached Ward, the British *chargé d'affaires* to tell him that Tarchiani had been authorized to initiate discussions with the Americans with a view to determine the role they would like Italy to assume in the defence of Europe. In the course of this conversation Ward understood that Zoppi had implied that 'something was already taking place between Italian and American officers in Frankfurt'. Ten days later, when Zoppi met Sir Victor Mallet, he was quick to retract the emphasis of his earlier comments. He now claimed that all he had said was that the Italian Ambassador had been instructed to express to the State Department Italy's interest in getting involved in the defence of Europe as the Italians felt that they could be 'one of the first potential victims of

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<sup>115</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9016/2307/72, 6-11-1948, letter, Macnab to Brigadier V. Boucher, DDMI, 27-11-1948; FO 371/73063/Z7807/273/72, 27-9-1948, minutes by Brown, 28-9-1948, and Kirkpatrick, 2-10-1948; FO 371/73064/Z8272/273/22, 11-10-1948, secret, letter, Mallet to FO, 1-10-1948

Russia'.<sup>116</sup> The result of this was that the British had become aware of Italy's attempts at exploring the possibility of association with the North Atlantic Pact, but they were not certain how serious or determined the Italians were in pursuing this policy as they were not privy to what exactly was 'passing between Rome and Washington'. This had given rise to speculation, encouraged by the Italians, that the Americans were putting pressure on Italy to come into an Atlantic Pact.<sup>117</sup> The British decided that all this was down to Dunn exerting pressure on the Italian government.<sup>118</sup>

Throughout that autumn Britain became more and more intransigent in its opposition and its stance was reinforced by the conclusions of the Military Committee of the Brussels Treaty that Italy was a liability.<sup>119</sup> To counter any potential American insistence, Kirkpatrick suggested that Italy might be invited to adhere to the treaty in some capacity at a later stage or to send a representative to the conference 'in some distinctive capacity', but only on the clear understanding that provisions ought to be made for the security of both Greece and Turkey as well.<sup>120</sup>

The crystallization of British reluctance was not mirrored in Washington where

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<sup>116</sup>. FO 371/73064/Z8272/273/22, 11-10-1948, secret, letter, Mallet to FO, 1-10-1948 .

<sup>117</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9136/2307, 10-11-1948, top secret, letter, Jebb to Kirkpatrick, 7-11-1948.

<sup>118</sup>. FO 371/73081/Z9405/2307, 19-11-1948, top secret, despatch, no. 988, FO to Mallet, 20-11-1948; FO 371/79292/851/1011/22, 28-1-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 26, Mallet to Bevin, 22-1-1949.

<sup>119</sup>. FO 371/Z8739/2307/72, 29-10-1948, top secret, letter, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 25-10-1948.

<sup>120</sup>. CAB 129/30, top secret, CP(48)249, memorandum by Bevin: 'North Atlantic Treaty and Western Union', 2-11-1948; FO 371/73080/Z8974/2307/72, 4-11-48, memorandum by Kirkpatrick, 1-11-1948.

the advocates of Italian inclusion gathered momentum when France changed sides. The French, from being determined advocates of a territorially restricted alliance and Italian exclusion, were converted into fervent supporters of Italian inclusion.<sup>121</sup> This policy re-orientation was based on multifarious reasons. The realization that American support for Italian inclusion was hardening opened the possibility of France's own strategic and colonial interests being accommodated within the Atlantic framework. The *Quai d'Orsay* had long worried that the Treaty would evolve a distinctly northern character within which it would be very difficult for France to incorporate its Northern African colonies. France calculated that by championing Italy it would be able to shift the emphasis of the alliance southwards, thereby making it possible to include French Northern Africa.<sup>122</sup> France also shared a border with Italy. The French did not relish the prospect of the Franco-Italian border being the first line of defence in the event of a future European war. The inclusion of Italy would mean that France's Alpine border would become safer.<sup>123</sup>

Britain was thus deprived of a strong ally and the cohesion of the BTO with regards to the territorial scope of the treaty was ruined.<sup>124</sup> When Bevin was told of the French change of heart he did not waver but stubbornly stuck to his position, declaring that he still thought that 'the disadvantages of bringing Italy

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<sup>121</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9136/2307/72, 10-11-48, top secret, letter, Kirkpatrick to Jebb, 7-11-48.

<sup>122</sup>. Young, *Britain, France*, pp. 102-4; Pastorelli, P., 'L' adesione dell' Italia al Patto Atlantico', *Storia Contemporanea*, Vol. XIV, 1983, p. 1024; Smith, *The US and Italy*, pp. 70-2; Varsori, A., 'La scelta occidentale dell' Italia, 1948-49', Part II, *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, Vol. 1, pp II', Vol. 1, p. 312.

<sup>123</sup>. FO 371/73081/Z9295/2307/72, 16-11-1948, top secret letter, Kirkpatrick to MoD, 24-11-1948; DEFE 5/9, top secret, COS(48)171, letter by Hayter to FO, 22-11-48.

<sup>124</sup>. FO 371/7080/Z9136/2307/72, 10-11-48, top secret, letter, Kirkpatrick to Jebb, 7-11-48



in now outweighed the advantages'.<sup>125</sup> In December he scribbled, 'Italy I am against it at present. More consultation is needed. Can we bring Italy in without Greece and Turkey?'.<sup>126</sup> However, by now, he could only count on the support of the Benelux countries in his efforts to exclude Italy.<sup>127</sup>

The British and French divergence of opinion remained unresolved and their positions became increasingly entrenched. The Permanent Commission of the Brussels Treaty, reflecting these divisions, failed to express a unanimous opinion and the Five Powers went to Washington deeply divided and unable to talk with one voice on the issue of Italian inclusion.<sup>128</sup> The Anglo-French antagonism spread to the Washington Talks and poisoned relations between the two powers to the degree that Franks remarked to Bonnet, the French Ambassador to the United States, that he could not negotiate with a revolver held against his head.<sup>129</sup>

British concerns and the number of reasons for opposing Italian inclusion seemed to increase daily. It was an issue over which British foreign policy makers and strategists could see eye to eye, and they were prepared to use

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<sup>125</sup>. FO 371/73081/Z9294/2307/72, 16-11-1948, minute by Roberts, 15-11-1948.

<sup>126</sup>. FO 371/73082/Z9910/2307/72, 6-12-1948, undated minute by Bevin.

<sup>127</sup>. FO 371/73081/Z9294/2307/72, 16-11-1948, report by Jebb, 12-11-1948.

<sup>128</sup>. FO 371/73082/Z9801/2307/72, 2-12-1948, top secret, Doc. no. A107, 2-12-1948.

<sup>129</sup>. DEFE 5/9, COS(48)171, top secret, letter by Hayter to FO, 22-11-48; FO 371/73081/Z9295/2307/72, 16-11-1948, top secret letter, Kirkpatrick to MoD, 24-11-1948.

their combined strength to counteract American insistence.<sup>130</sup> This attitude was strongly underpinned by genuine and widespread concern that Italy would use the occasion to advance some of its revisionist claims, or in Jebb's alarmist words, to 'work a *combinazione*', (sic) i.e. to link the issue of their accession with colonial concessions and the revision of the Peace Treaty.<sup>131</sup> The position of the Foreign Office hardened further when the Chiefs of Staff Committee met again to re-consider the inclusion of Italy and Scandinavia on 23 November. The Chiefs of Staff asserted forcefully that they were unaware of any new factors arising that made a revision of British policy towards Italy opportune or necessary.<sup>132</sup>

The views of the British government became public in a clumsy fashion during Field Marshal Montgomery's visit to Brussels in his capacity as the Chairman of the Western Union's Chiefs of Staff Committee. Montgomery outlined the 'grand design' strategy for the defence of the Western Union, as had been agreed by the COS and identified its line of defence as extending from the Alps along to the Franco-Italian border and on to the Mediterranean thus excluding Italy on the basis that it was not a Brussels Treaty power.<sup>133</sup> Later, in Paris, he described the prospect of Italian inclusion as 'a grave mistake'.<sup>134</sup> He was also doubly negative at the possibility of rearming Italy under the Brussels Pact or

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<sup>130</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73080/ Z9136/2307/72, 10-11-1948, top secret, letter, Jebb to Kirkpatrick, 7-11-1948; DEFE 5/9, top secret, COS(48)227, 29-12-48.

<sup>131</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9136/2307/72, 10-11-1948, top secret, letter, Jebb to Kirkpatrick, 7-11-1948.

<sup>132</sup>. DEFE 4/18, top secret, COS(48)167th meeting, 23-11-48; DEFE 5/9, top secret, COS(48)171, 22-11-48; CAB 131/6, DO(48)64, 20-9-1948.

<sup>133</sup>. FO 371/73081/9345/2307, 17-11-1948, top secret, Montgomery, Strategy for the defence of the Western Union, 12/14-11-1948; DEFE 4/16, top secret, COS(48)124th meeting, 20-9-48; DEFE 5/12, top secret, COS(48)200(O), 8-9-1949; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)91, 8-9-1948.

<sup>134</sup>. Ibid.

North Atlantic Pact (NAP) umbrella because, simply, there were not enough arms to go around. He stated unequivocally that on military grounds he was strongly opposed to Italian inclusion in either arrangement. He had no doubts that Italian participation could only be considered on political grounds, but in that case, he warned, strategy and military requirements would have to be reshaped to suit politics.<sup>135</sup>

The opponents of Italian inclusion were running out of time as all their arguments appeared to fall on deaf ears.<sup>136</sup> One of the principal reasons for this was that Britain was not able to exploit the splits within the State Department to its benefit. The Washington Embassy was disinclined to cultivate supporters within the State Department against Italian entry because it was these very individuals who were obstructing the idea of the Atlantic alliance. Two conflicting schools of thought were in evidence within the State Department. The Office of European Affairs favoured Italian inclusion on political grounds whereas the Policy Planning Staff advocated exclusion on long-term policy grounds - namely that it would solidify the present division of Europe further.<sup>137</sup> However, as progress was made on a draft NATO treaty,

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<sup>135</sup>. FO 371/73082/Z9690/2307/27, 29-11-1948, top secret, letter, Sir Oliver Harvey, British Ambassador to France, to Kirkpatrick, 25-11-1948.

<sup>136</sup>. FO 371/73081/Z9295/2307/72, 16-11-1948, top secret, letter by Kirkpatrick to MoD, 24-11-48; DEFE 5/9, top secret, COS(48)227, 29-12-48; Although the British were concerned about the security of Greece and Turkey, they were not in favour of including these countries in the North Atlantic Pact. It was feared that their inclusion would undermine the concept and cohesion of the Treaty. The security problems facing these countries was not one that could be addressed by such a regional defensive pact. Furthermore, if the yardstick for inclusion was to be solely Soviet pressure on a country then Greece and Turkey would have to be included but this would result inevitably in a more extensive pact for which a clear territorial scope would be difficult to define as countries like Iran, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan would have reason to be included.

<sup>137</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 225, 284-5; Smith, op. cit., pp. 78-83; Kennan, op. cit., pp. 409-14; Bohlen, op. cit., p. 267.

Oliver Franks noted that the hand of the adversaries of the military alliance and of Italy's inclusion was weakening and that the inclusionists appeared to be winning.<sup>138</sup>

In the light of these developments, Franks sensed that London ought to re-examine the issue and asked for clarification on several matters. Should Italy be invited to join and would Northern French Africa be included too? In such an eventuality should any provisions be made for Greece, Turkey and Iran? The Defence Committee examined these questions but misled themselves with a false sense of security as it felt that France's unreserved support for Italian inclusion could still be isolated provided that Britain presented its argument convincingly. Because of this firm but false perception, the Defence Committee prepared no fall-back position and simply reiterated its rather predictable view, namely, that Italy must be excluded until it had become stronger militarily and until Italian pro-neutralist feelings had subsided. Since the idea of forming a Mediterranean Pact did not appear probable, it also recommended that the most suitable Western organization for Italy at this time was the Council of Europe because this did not entail any military commitments. Many of its conclusions were based on the assumption that the US was prepared to contemplate a pact of a longer duration so long as no Mediterranean Powers were included.<sup>139</sup> The Foreign Office was in full agreement with the Defence Committee but despite its opposition to Italian inclusion, it was not impervious to the impact exclusion would have on Italy which was bound to feel maligned and isolated.<sup>140</sup> A solution to this problem would be for Italy, along with Greece

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<sup>138</sup>. FO 371/73077/Z7592/2307/72, 20-9-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 393, Franks to FO, 18-9-1948.

<sup>139</sup>. CAB 131/6, top secret, Annex: C, DO(48)88, 24-12-1948.

<sup>140</sup>. FO 371/73080/Z9136/2307/72, 10-11-1948, top secret, letter, Jebb to Kirkpatrick, 7-11-1948.

and Turkey, to receive a guarantee from the North Atlantic countries.<sup>141</sup>

Oliver Franks was instructed to urge upon the representatives of the seven powers in Washington the disadvantages of Italian inclusion, but at the same time to raise the issue in such a way that Anglo-American relations and progress towards the signing of the Treaty did not suffer. The Foreign Office was anxious to ensure that the matter would not divert attention from the central issues at stake and it instructed its negotiators in Washington that in the event the Americans were absolutely determined to bring Italy in, HMG would find it 'clearly necessary to review [its] position'. This reflected Bevin's view that the most important issue was to secure the signing of the 'the Atlantic Pact as soon as possible'.<sup>142</sup> When the Washington Talks on the North Atlantic Pact resumed in December 1948 and as the participants progressed towards concluding a draft treaty, Italian inclusion was put on the table once again. The ensuing discussions revealed the seemingly irreconcilable points of view held by its opponents and supporters. Bonnet made an 'impassioned' plea in favour of Italy's inclusion on the grounds of its importance to the defence of France and its Northern African colonies and thus by extension to European defence in the event of war.<sup>143</sup> The British took the French salvos in their stride. The Foreign Office thought that ultimately France could be persuaded to withdraw its demands for the inclusion French North Africa which would make Italian inclusion unnecessary.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>. FO 371/73081/Z9295/2307/72, top secret, letter by Kirkpatrick to MoD, 24-12-48.

<sup>142</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>143</sup>. FO 371/73083/Z10510/2307/22, 27-12-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 568, Franks to FO, 22-12-1948;

<sup>144</sup>. FO 371/73083/Z10566/2307/72, 29-12-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 30-12-1948.

A month earlier, for a short time the Foreign Office had become alarmed when, Achilles and Hickerson convinced them that the American military had dropped its opposition and had accepted that Italian inclusion was desirable not only on political but also strategic grounds.<sup>145</sup> The Foreign Office and Franks had sensed that Bohlen's and Kennan's rearguard action had been blunted by the pro-inclusionists within the State Department,<sup>146</sup> but they found it completely unpalatable that the American military could reach this conclusion when both the British and the Western Union Chiefs of Staff had formed exactly the opposite opinion.<sup>147</sup> This apparently mysterious conclusion was resolved by General Morgan (BJSM) who reported that the US military's opinion on the matter had not 'crystallized' as yet, and that General Bradley had never advanced a military case for Italy, merely that he was concerned about the effects of exclusion and wanted Italy to be 'bound up' in some way with the West.<sup>148</sup> The British took heart from these reports, again maintaining their stance that the alliance could not afford to undertake a commitment to Italy for

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<sup>145</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. 3, pp. 333-5; FO 371/73081/Z9295/2307/72, 16-11-1948, top secret, letter by Kirkpatrick to MoD, 24-11-48; FO 371/73083/Z10510/2307/72, 27-12-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 568, Franks to FO, 22-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10182/2307/72, 11-12-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 16-12-1948; top secret, letter, Kirkpatrick to General Hollis, 24-12-1948; secret, letter, Hollis to Kirkpatrick, 11-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10345/2307/22, 15-12-1948, top secret, telegram, Franks to FO, 15-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10566/2307/72, 24-12-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 30-12-1948; Folly, M., 'Britain and the Issue of Italian Membership of NATO, 1948-49', *Review of International Studies*, no. 13, 1987, pp. 186-7.

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

<sup>147</sup>. FO 371/73082/Z10182/2307/72, 14-12-1948, top secret, letter, Kirkpatrick to General Hollis, 24-12-1948, minutes by Montague-Browne, 14-12-1948, Crosthwaite, Italian desk, 16-12-1948; DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49)1st meeting., 3-1-1949; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)141(Final), 30-12-1948; CAB 131/6, DO(48)88, 24-12-1948.

<sup>148</sup>. FO 371/79219/89/1074/72, 5-1-1949, top secret, telegram, JSM 546, BJSM, Washington to Ministry of Defence, 5-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z78/1074/72, 5-1-1949, minute, Kirkpatrick, 6-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z126/1074/72, 6-1-1949, top secret, telegram, COS(W)637, MoD to BJSM, Washington, 2-1-1949.

all the reasons they had put forward many times.<sup>149</sup> As the last session of the Working Group for 1948 opened and the draft Treaty was more or less ready, Franks made it clear that the British government thought the alliance ought to give Italy adequately strong assurances with regards to her security and that steps ought to be taken to affirm its links with the West both so that the Soviets did not misunderstand the situation and to minimize Italian ill-feeling.<sup>150</sup>

The attitude of the Norwegian government added further potency to British endeavours to exclude Italy, especially because of Norway's immense strategic importance to the defence of the UK and the fact that the Norwegians were perceived as being in the Soviet firing line after the insistent Soviet offers of a non-aggression pact.<sup>151</sup> The Norwegian government made it crystal clear that they would find it impossible to be party to an organization that included Italy.<sup>152</sup> As Halvard Lange, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, explained, the inclusion of Italy would mean that the pact was no longer an Atlantic one but had become Mediterranean in character, and Norway had no interest in being involved in Mediterranean affairs. The Norwegians emphasized their intransigence by saying that although they were not particularly excited at the prospect of having Portugal involved they would go along with its membership, but that they drew the line at Italy.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>. DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49)1st meeting, 3-1-49; CAB 131/8, top secret, DO(49)1st meeting, 31-1-49; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)141(Final), 30-12-1948; CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)88, 24-12-1948.

<sup>150</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73083/Z10566/2307/72, 29-12-1948, top secret, Annex C, 24-12-1948.

<sup>151</sup>. FO 371/77397/N1193/1073/63, 5-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 73, Sir L. Collier, British Ambassador to Norway, to FO, 4-2-1949.

<sup>152</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>153</sup>. Ibid., N1148/1073/63, 4-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 64, Collier to FO, 2-2-1949.

Britain's consistent opposition led the Americans to propose a series of undertakings. They promised that Italian inclusion would not mean that Italy would be allowed to exceed the military restrictions imposed upon her by the Peace Treaty and that it would not affect the entitlement of military supplies for the BTO countries. In their efforts to find a solution acceptable to all concerned the Americans floated, once again, the idea of Italy joining the Brussels Treaty initially and later on being invited to accede to the North Atlantic Pact or even to join the pact as an associated member. This option met with vehement and unanimous opposition from all the BTO powers including France. They argued that there were not only prohibitive objections on military grounds but also that it was doubtful that Italian public opinion would approve of its government joining a Pact that did not include America.<sup>154</sup>

All countries agreed that Greece and Turkey ought not to participate in the proposed alliance but that at the same time steps would have to be taken to ensure that their security was not compromised. Britain wanted to insert an article into the treaty that would cover the security of Greece, Italy and Turkey by stating that 'should any member state of the OEEC other than a party to this treaty, be the object of an armed attack, the parties will immediately consult together with a view to taking such measures as may be desirable or necessary in order to restore the situation'.<sup>155</sup> The Americans accepted the British view that the two countries would have to be provided for in some way and toyed with the possibility of including an article enshrining some assurances to all OEEC countries. France was sympathetic to idea but the Canadians were quick to nip it in the bud by stating that their government was

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<sup>154</sup>. FO 371/73083/Z10510/2307/72, 27-12-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 568, Franks to FO, 22-12-1948; Smith, op. cit., pp. 78.

<sup>155</sup>. CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)88, 24-12-1948; CAB 131/8, top secret, DO(49)1st meeting, item 2: Atlantic Pact, 31-1-49.



not prepared to include such assurances in the Treaty itself.<sup>156</sup>

Both the Americans and the Canadians reluctantly agreed to consider the inclusion of some parts of French North Africa, namely Algeria and French Morocco, in the Pact.<sup>157</sup> They were unwilling however to go as far as the British would have liked when the latter suggested including all Africa north of 30° north in order to include the British troops in the Suez and Cyrenaica area, or even to cover the Belgian Congo.<sup>158</sup> Lovett thought that this would extend the scope of the Treaty too far, it would exceed the spirit of the Vandenberg Resolution, would be unacceptable to the Congress, and make it difficult to exclude Greece, Iran and Turkey.<sup>159</sup> Oliver Franks advised against Britain pursuing the inclusion of Northern Africa because it would weaken their case to exclude Italy.<sup>160</sup> The Foreign Office accepting his advice recognised that it had no hope whatsoever of including any other area of Africa apart from French North Africa. Franks was duly able to inform his fellow participants in Washington that Britain was flexible on the matter and would not be pressing to include the whole of North Africa.<sup>161</sup> The Benelux representatives followed suit.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup>. FO 371/73083/Z10497/2307/72, top secret, telegram, no. 562, Franks to FO, 24-12-1948.

<sup>157</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>158</sup>. FO 371/79218/Z47/1074/72, 4-1-1949, top secret, WET, 10th meeting, 22-12-1948.

<sup>159</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>160</sup>. FO 371/73083/Z10526/2307/72, 29-12-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 579, Franks to FO, 24-12-1948.

<sup>161</sup>. FO 371/73083/Z10345/2307/72, 20-12-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 552, Franks to FO, 19-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10346/2307/72, 20-12-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 13043, FO to Washington, 21-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10497/2307/72, top secret, telegram, no. 562, Franks to FO, 18-12-1948.

<sup>162</sup>. FO 371/79218/Z47/1074/72, 4-1-1949, top secret, WET, 10th meeting., 22-12-1948.

The discussion then turned to Italy. Potent and emotive arguments were deployed for and against its inclusion. The spectre of an Italy bereft, increasingly isolated and introspective and an easy prey to Communist propaganda and pressure, was one argument projected by Bonnet.<sup>163</sup> Italy's strategic position in the defence of Western Europe because of its geographical contiguity with it was another. Franks protested, equally persuasively, that it had to be excluded because it was not a North Atlantic country, it was restricted militarily by an international peace treaty, it would extend the alliance too far afield and that it would not contribute anything substantial in military terms.<sup>164</sup> Silvercruys, the Belgian representative, Van Kleffens, the Dutch representative and Le Gallais, the representative of Luxemburg, all took the opportunity to express the strong aversion of their governments to incorporating Italy on military grounds.<sup>165</sup> The ambassadors of the Benelux powers also declared their concerns that the inclusion of a country such as Italy would weaken the defensive position of the West and that in any case, the Italians themselves seemed to be indecisive as they had as yet not even solicited an association with the BTO.<sup>166</sup> Hume Wrong, the Canadian representative, while noting that Italy was a special case meriting some special arrangement, objected to Italian inclusion on military and geographical

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<sup>163</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>164</sup>. FO 371/79218/Z47/1074/72, 4-1-1949, top secret, WET, 10th meeting, 22-1-1948; FO 371/73083/Z10566/2307, 29-12-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 30-12-1948.

<sup>165</sup>. FO 371/79220/Z202/1074/72, 10-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 11, Sir George Rendel, British Ambassador to Belgium, to Bevin, 8-1-1949.

<sup>166</sup>. FO 371/73083/Z10525/2307, 29-12-1948, top secret, Annex: C, Italy, 24-12-1948; FO 371/79218/Z47/1074/72, 4-1-1949, top secret, WET, 10th meeting, 22-12-1948.

grounds.<sup>167</sup> Lovett acknowledged that although the United States had not as yet developed a firm position, he could not see Italy being left without any protection.<sup>168</sup> Thus, the Seven Powers could reach no agreement on whether or not to invite Italy to join the Pact and deferred the decision for a later date, allowing all participants to consult their governments further.<sup>169</sup>

Franks informed the Foreign Office of the impasse, observing that he detected growing American support for inclusion and he warned that the British arguments were becoming threadbare. He requested fresh points and arguments from the Foreign Office which were based on detailed strategic thinking, the Italian reluctance and the advantages of including Italy in the Council of Europe rather than the Atlantic organization.<sup>170</sup> Dealing with the first and third aspects of Frank's suggestions was easy for the Foreign Office. Both Attlee and Bevin were in agreement that all efforts should be made to exclude Italy because of their certitude that Italy could not be defended for the time being, at least, in the event of a Red Army attack. They also shared concerns that Italian inclusion at this time would have an adverse effect on Italian domestic politics and that the Council of Europe was better suited to Italy's needs because its membership did not carry any military obligations on its part.<sup>171</sup> Bevin instructed that the matter ought to be referred to the Defence

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<sup>167</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73083/Z10566/2307, 29-12-1948, top secret, Annex C, 24-12-1948; FO 371/79220/Z246/1074/72, 10-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 108A, Franks to FO, 7-1-1949.

<sup>168</sup>. Ibid.; Smith, op. cit., pp. 64 and 75-8

<sup>169</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>170</sup>. FO 371/79219/Z78/1074/72, 5-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 48, Franks to Bevin, 4-1-1949.

<sup>171</sup>. Ibid., Z55/1074/ 72, 5-1-1949, top secret, letter, Bevin to Attlee, PM/48/122, 31-12-1948, top secret, personal minute, Attlee to Bevin, M1/49, 1-1-1949.

Committee and that Mallet had to gauge the sentiments of the Italian government.<sup>172</sup> The Defence Committee affirmed that Italian inclusion would mean that Western Europe would have to be defended from the Rhine, along the Alps and then southwards to Trieste. The consequence would be the undertaking of extra burdens that Britain did not have the resources to shoulder.<sup>173</sup> In the event of a crisis, the Defence Committee concluded, it would place the allies in the embarrassing position of having to tell Italy, a fellow participant to the pact, that they could not defend it.<sup>174</sup>

It was not as easy, however, for London to ascertain the prevailing mood in Rome, first, because the conflicting messages emanating from the Italian government were continuing and second, because Bevin and the Foreign Office were not paying due consideration to the advice of the Rome Embassy and Sir Victor Mallet, in particular.<sup>175</sup> Mallet admitted candidly that it was not possible to form an exact opinion of the Italians because he had not been privy to the confessions of any Italian politician nor official about any firm decisions being made, probably because by that stage influential Italian circles had decided to 'write Britain off' as they felt it to be implacably mistrustful towards Italy.<sup>176</sup> He felt, however, that the message he was getting from discussions

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<sup>172</sup>. FO 371/79219/Z55/1074/72, 4-1-1949, minute, Roberts, 30-12-1948; minute, Kirkpatrick to Attlee, 30-12-1948.

<sup>173</sup>. CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)88, 24-12-1948; CAB 131/8, top secret, DO(49)1st meeting, 3-1-49.

<sup>174</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/Z78/1074/72, 5-1-1949, top secret, Bevin to Franks, 5-1-1949; DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49)1st meeting, 3-1-49; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)141(Final), 30-12-1948.

<sup>175</sup>. FO 371/79219/Z136/1074/72, 7-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no.26, Mallet to FO, 6-1-1949; FO 371/79218/Z55/1074/72, 4-1-1949, top secret, no.18, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 29-12-1948, top secret, letter, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 5-1-1948.

<sup>176</sup>. FO 371/79292/851/1011/22, 28-1-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 26, Mallet to Bevin, 22-1-1949.

with Sforza, Gallarati-Scotti, Zoppi and Guidotti, was that although there were still many schools of thought in the Italian government with regards to the Atlantic Pact, nevertheless Italy soon would be 'fishing for an invitation'.<sup>177</sup> He also gauged that Dunn was encouraging Italy to get involved and that should Italy be invited to join she would do so. He noted that the Italian government had undertaken a propaganda offensive to convince its public opinion that Italy was better off under US protection under the aegis of the NAP rather than finding itself in a 'no man's land' between East and West.<sup>178</sup> The Italian government regarded membership of the Council of Europe as an unsatisfactory alternative and a unilateral declaration guaranteeing Italian independence was viewed only as second best to full membership of the Atlantic Pact.<sup>179</sup>

Mallet ventured to warn that when the Italians came to request admission Britain ought to 'embrace' it or risk their resentment.<sup>180</sup> These were prophetic words, but they were not taken at face value by the Foreign Office which was still convinced that the Italian government really did not wish to join as it could never hope to carry Parliament and public opinion on such an issue. The Foreign Office went on to discount Mallet's assertions as being merely the

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<sup>177</sup>. FO 371/79220/Z260/1074/72, 11-1-1949, secret, telegram, no. 42, Mallet to FO, 10-1-1949.

<sup>178</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9521/637/22, 24-11-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 24-11-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 1802, Mallet to FO, 23-11-1948; Vigezzi, B. *De Gasperi, Sforza, la diplomazia italiana fra patto di Bruxelles*, pp. 29-43; Varsori, A., 'La scelta occidentale dell' Italia, 1948-49' *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, Vol. II, 1985, pp. 303-362.

<sup>179</sup>. FO 371/79219/Z138/1074/72, 7-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 26, Mallet to FO, 6-1-1949; FO371/79221/Z352/1074/72, 13-1-1949, secret, letter, Mallet to Kirkpatrick, 5-1-1949.

<sup>180</sup>. FO 371/79220/Z260/1074/72, 11-1-1949, secret, telegram, no. 42, Mallet to FO, 10-1-1949.

product of American pressure on Italy.<sup>181</sup> It felt it better to pay more attention to the words of the Turkish Foreign Minister who reported that De Gasperi had told him that Italian public opinion had not as yet been convinced that neutralism was not an option and that he would be embarking on a campaign to educate it.<sup>182</sup> The Foreign Office was also cognisant of the fact that Saragat and his secessionist socialists were against inclusion because they feared that this would make the split with the PSI permanent and would result in Italy being drawn into an ever more right wing course where social reform would be impossible.<sup>183</sup> The Foreign Office interpreted these confused messages emerging from Rome as a sign that the Italian government was reluctant to face the issue because it feared for its own stability.<sup>184</sup>

January 1949 saw a series of developments that made the Foreign Office realize that its efforts to bar Italy from the emergent Atlantic pact were rapidly being compromised. Soon after Dean Acheson replaced Marshall at the helm of the State Department, Franks warned that Acheson would be taking a closer personal interest in Italy. Franks also reported that he could almost sense it in

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<sup>181</sup>. FO 371/79221/Z283/1074/72, 11-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 196, Franks to FO, 10-1-1949.

<sup>182</sup>. FO 371/79218/Z55/1074/72, 4-1-1949, top secret, personal, telegram, no. 28, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 5-1-1949.

<sup>183</sup>. FO 371/79221/Z358/1074/72, 13-1-1949, record of conversation between Phillip Noel Baker, Minister, Commonwealth Relations Office, and Saragat, 10-1-1949.

<sup>184</sup>. Ibid., top secret, telegram, no. 28, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 5-1-1949; FO 371/79219/Z138/1074/72, 7-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 26, Mallet to FO, 6-1-1949.

the air that Italy was making overtures to join.<sup>185</sup> Jebb similarly warned that Britain would soon face pressure to accept Italian association on political grounds despite the overwhelming military arguments against it.<sup>186</sup> Despite these reports from Rome and Washington, the Foreign Office saw no need to rethink Britain's negotiating position in Washington and continued to include Italy in its draft declaration safeguarding Italy alongside Greece, Turkey and Iran.<sup>187</sup> Thus, when on 12 January, Tarchiani called on Hickerson at the State Department to submit Sforza's memorandum of 6 January containing Italy's official request for inclusion, Britain was caught unawares and had to readjust its policy quickly to the new realities.<sup>188</sup> As a consequence, Britain found itself having to perform two major and seemingly mutually exclusive tasks, namely, to ensure Italian exclusion without however, publicly snubbing De Gasperi.<sup>189</sup>

British tactics evolved in two ways. There was resigned recognition that should

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<sup>185</sup>. FO 371/79220/Z199/1074/72, 10-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 120, Franks to FO, 6-1-1949; Z200/1074/72, 10-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 121, Franks to FO, 7-1-1949. On 6th January, the special correspondent in Rome of the New York Times, Camille Cianfarra, wrote a remarkably well-informed scoop based on inside information provided either by Dunn or *Palazzo Chigi*, entitled 'Italy ready to tie defence to West's and which announced more or less that Italy was to inform the US Government that it was prepared to join the North Atlantic Pact, six days before Tarchiani gave Sforza's memorandum to the State Department.

<sup>186</sup>. DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49)th meeting, 17-1-49.

<sup>187</sup>. FO 371/79220/Z200/1074/72, 10-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 366, FO to Franks, 10-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z201/1074/72, 10-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 367, FO to Washington, 10-1-1949.

<sup>188</sup>. FO 371/79222/Z557/1074/72, 21-1-1949, record of conversation between Bevin and Gallarati-Scotti, 19-1-1949; top secret, despatch, no. 69, Bevin to Mallet, 19-1-1949; FO 371/79230/1918/1074/72, 4-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 12-1-1949, Franks to FO, 4-1-1949.

<sup>189</sup>. FO 371/79221/Z361/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 269, Franks to FO, 13-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z362/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 270, Franks to FO, 13-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z363/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 271, Franks to FO, 13-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z366/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 65, Mallet to FO, 13-1-1949.

the US decide to come off the fence and openly support Italy, Britain would have to acquiesce in its inclusion.<sup>190</sup> This possibility led the British government to move quickly to secure an explicit American declaration that Italy would not be allowed to use entry as a means of promoting its nationalistic aspirations by pressing for a revision of the clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty.<sup>191</sup> Meanwhile, British efforts to exclude Italy continued by playing the numbers game and making the 'Washington spirit' work for them. The Foreign Office was convinced that the Italian government had taken the initiative only after immense American encouragement, if not pressure, and despite Hickerson's protestations.<sup>192</sup> By referring the matter of Italy's potential accession to either the BTO or the Atlantic Pact to the Permanent Commission of the BTO Britain hoped, as a last ditch attempt, to secure the unanimous opposition of all members of the BTO including France in the best case scenario or minus France in the worst case. Even in the worst case, given Canada's attitude, Britain could secure five out of the seven voices on the Working Party of the Washington Exploratory Talks on Security and thus could hope to convince the US that Italian inclusion did not have majority support.<sup>193</sup>

The Permanent Commission and the Consultative Council of the BTO proclaimed unanimously against the inclusion of Italy in the Brussels Treaty on the grounds that should Italy be made a member it would expect, naturally, to

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<sup>190</sup>. Ibid., Z364/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, minute by Shuckburgh to Jebb, 14-1-1949; FO 371/79222/Z519/1074, 19-1-1949, minute by Rose, 19-1-1949.

<sup>191</sup>. Ibid., top secret, telegram, no. 353, Franks to FO, 19-1-1949.

<sup>192</sup>. Ibid., Z364/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 272, Franks to FO, 13-1-1949.

<sup>193</sup>. Ibid., Z364/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 641, FO to Washington, 15-1-1949; FO 371/79222/Z519/1074/72, 19-1-1949, minute by Shuckburgh, 20-1-1949.



be defended and the Five Powers simply could not afford to undertake such an obligation.<sup>194</sup> In view of France's passionate advocacy of Italian inclusion in the Atlantic Treaty the BTO powers failed to reach a unanimous position and a compromise emerged to the effect that the Five powers would acquiesce in Italian accession only if the US pressed for it and only if Italy were to join without any preconditions.<sup>195</sup> So far as Britain and the Benelux countries were concerned the ball was now in America's court and Acheson came under increasing pressure to state America's position towards the issue of Italian entry.<sup>196</sup>

In the meanwhile, British statesmen embarked on a damage limitation exercise with Italy. The Italian government had formed the erroneous opinion that the only power opposed to Italy's accession was Britain and that Oliver Franks was the only member of the Washington Working Party still holding out against Italy. As a result Anglo-Italian relations had been deteriorating.<sup>197</sup> Bevin protested that such a conclusion was inaccurate.<sup>198</sup> His position was that inclusion at this stage was inopportune because it could plummet Italy into an internal crisis and

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<sup>194</sup>. Ibid., FO to Washington, top secret, telegram, no. 940, 22-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z666/1074/72, 21-1-1949, brief for Bevin for his conversation with the Italian Ambassador, prepared by Jebb, 17-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z677/1074/72, 24-1-1949, extract from record of conversation of Bevin with Schuman, 13-1-1949; FO 371/79223/Z940/1074/72, 1-2-1949, top secret, minute by Jebb, 27-1-1949, record of 4th meeting of the Consultative Council, 27-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z971/1074/72, 2-2-1949, top secret, minute by Jebb, 28-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1386, Bevin to Franks, 3-2-1949.

<sup>195</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/79224/Z1246/1074/72, 10-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1699, Jebb to Hoyer-Millar, 11-2-1949.

<sup>196</sup>. FO 371/79226/Z1453/1074/72, 17-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 965, Franks to FO, 15-2-1949.

<sup>197</sup>. FO 371/79222/Z557/1074/72, 21-1-1949, record of conversation between Bevin and Gallarati Scotti, top secret, despatch, no. 69, Bevin to Mallet 19-1-1949; FO 371/79225/Z1430/1074/72, 16-2-1949, minute by McNeil, 11-2-1949.

<sup>198</sup>. Ibid.

because Italy could not be given any positive security guarantees. It would be better for Italy to join when both it and Britain were stronger, possibly in two years time.<sup>199</sup> Bevin also declared that his motives were not based upon any anti-Italian feelings or memories of the last war; he simply believed that it was in Italy's best interests not to be included at this stage in an alliance that carried military obligations.<sup>200</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that he was not prepared to support Italy in its choice diminished the effectiveness of his approach especially as America was coming to the firm conclusion that, from the moment De Gasperi's government had openly asked to join, a public rejection would be more harmful to Italy than anything else.<sup>201</sup>

The US had committed itself to using any political, economic or military means to keep Italy from falling under Soviet control and did not see fit to exclude it from both the Brussels Treaty and the Atlantic Pact.<sup>202</sup> Lovett expressed the American administration's consensus by claiming that Italy would have to be associated with the Pact because of its geographical position and strategic

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<sup>199</sup>. FO 371/79221/Z436/1074/72, 15-1-1949, minute by Jebb, 13-1-1949; FO 371/79222/Z677/1074, 24-1-1949, brief for Bevin's conversation with the Italian Ambassador prepared by Jebb, 17-1-1949; FO 371/79225/1430/1074/72, 16-2-1949, minute by McNeil, 11-1-1949.

<sup>200</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>201</sup>. FO 371/79221/Z364/1074/72, 14-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 272, Franks to FO, 13-1-1949; FO 371/79222/Z555/1074/72, 20-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 384, Franks to FO, 19-1-1949.

<sup>202</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. 3, pp. 724-6; FRUS, 1949, Vol. 4, pp. 142-3; Smith, E.T., 'The Fear of Subversion: The United States and the Inclusion of Italy in the North Atlantic Treaty', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 7, 1983, pp. 150-5; ditto, *The United States, Italy and NATO*, pp. 82-9; Feis, op. cit., p. 311; Miller, *The United States and Italy*, pp. 268-71; Tarchiani, op. cit., pp. 167-8; Varsori, 'La Scelta Occidentale', pp. 353-7 and 360; Ortona, 'Italy's Entry into the Atlantic Alliance', pp. 107; Kaplan, L., *The United States and NATO: The Formative Years*, Lexington, 1984, p.118; Pastorelli, op. cit., p.1028; Henderson, N., *The Birth of NATO*, London, 1982, pp. 44-5; Petersen, N., 'Bargaining Power among Potential Allies: Negotiating the North Atlantic Treaty, 1948-49', *Review of International Studies*, no. 12, 1986, pp. 200-1; Folly, 'Britain and the Issue', p. 190.

concerns.<sup>203</sup> Acheson, while preferring to keep his options open because of the difficulties he was facing with Congress, also let it be known that he was in favour of Italian accession but that his government had not committed itself yet to an invitation formally or informally.<sup>204</sup> He also went on to convey his government's belief that a declaration on the lines proposed to cover Greece, Turkey and Iran was not adequate for Italy, nor was membership of the Council of Europe a sufficient alternative to the Atlantic Pact. Italy would have to be invited to participate in the Pact, but Washington would not insist on inclusion in the BTO.<sup>205</sup> He stressed, however, that the American Administration was not prepared to carry sole responsibility for this invitation and that the decision on Italian participation had to be based on common agreement among the Seven Powers.<sup>206</sup>

The State Department's position was greatly facilitated by the unyielding support of France and in particular of Ambassador Bonnet, who propounded the issue of Italian accession at every given opportunity. He went so far as to provoke the wrath of his Brussels Treaty allies by putting his own gloss on the decisions of the Permanent Commission which did not always represent their

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<sup>203</sup>. FO 371/79223/Z945/1074/72, 1-2-1949, WET, 11th meeting, 14-1-1949.

<sup>204</sup>. FO 371/79228/Z1753/1074/72, 26-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1116, Franks to FO, 25-2-1949.

<sup>205</sup>. FO 371/79228/Z1717/1074/72, 24-2-1949, minute by Jebb, 'Draft Declaration Covering Greece, Turkey, Italy and Iran', 22-2-1949; FO 371/79229/Z1807/1074/72, 28-2-1949, top secret, letter, Franks to FO, 26-2-1949; FO 371/76384/Z3113/3/500, 30-4-1949, top secret, Permanent Under-Secretaries Committee, PUSC(19)Final, 'Near East', 30-4-1949.

<sup>206</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/79227/Z1629/1074/72, 23-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1037, Franks to FO, 21-2-1949; FO 371/79237/Z2418/1074/72, 18-3-1949, WET, 13th meeting, 25-2-1949; Smith, *The US, Italy and NATO*, pp. 82-5.

spirit or their letter.<sup>207</sup> As February and March unfolded, France became intransigent in its position and raised the stakes by claiming that if Italy was not included it would have to reconsider its stance towards the Atlantic Pact since the French Chamber and public opinion would not in these circumstances support French accession.<sup>208</sup>

In view of the climate American and French attitudes had produced in Washington, the Permanent Commission decreed that at this stage, the most important thing was for the Pact to be signed as quickly as possible and that all other issues were of lesser significance.<sup>209</sup> Canada and the Benelux countries were still not convinced of the merits of Italian inclusion, but they felt they had 'to bow to the inevitable'.<sup>210</sup> Britain decided that should the Americans come out firmly in support of Italian inclusion and provided that Italy came in

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<sup>207</sup>. FO 371/79224/Z1246/1074/72, 10-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 800, Franks to FO, 9-2-1949; FO 371/79228/Z1754/1074/72, 26-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1117, 25-2-1949; FO 371/79223/Z945/1074/72, 1-2-1949, WET, 11th meeting, 14-1-1949.

<sup>208</sup>. FO 371/79229/Z1806/1074/72, 28-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 226, Harvey to France, to FO, 28-2-1949; FO 371/79231/Z1991/1074/72, 7-3-1949, secret, despatch, 307, Bevin to Harvey, record of conversation between Massigli and Bevin, 2-3-1949; FO 371/79237/Z2418/1074/72, 18-3-1949, WET, 13th meeting, 25-2-1949.

<sup>209</sup>. FO 371/79228/1718/1074/72, 24-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 2155, FO to Washington, 23-2-1949, relating the conclusions of the Permanent Commission during its 23-2-1949 session.

<sup>210</sup>. FO 371/79224/Z1138/1074/72, 7-2-1949, top secret, letter, Henderson to Russell, 1-2-1949; FO 371/79229/1838/1074/72, 28-2-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 110, Gage, the Hague, to FO, 28-2-1949; *ibid.*, Z1875/1074/72, 1-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 94, Rendel to FO, 2-3-1949; FO 371/79230/Z2020/1074/72, 8-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 100, Rendel to FO, 5-5-1949.

unconditionally and did not cause any delays, Britain too would not oppose it.<sup>211</sup>

As soon as the British position was communicated to the State Department, Acheson declared the formal approval of the US government to Italian participation and he simultaneously issued an invitation to Italy, through Dunn,<sup>212</sup> before the formal decision to accept Italy as an original signatory of the Pact was taken by the Working Party in Washington on 15 March 1949.<sup>213</sup>

By March, the Italian government had succeeded in convincing enough Italians that their country had no other choice but to commit itself to the Atlantic alliance. On 22nd March 1949, the debate on foreign affairs in the Italian Chamber of Deputies was dominated by Italy's forthcoming acceptance of the US invitation. It lasted for 56 hours, without recess, and it produced a majority of 172 votes in favour of the result for which Sforza and De Gasperi had worked so hard during January and March 1949.<sup>214</sup> Italy communicated its acceptance of the invitation formally on 29th March 1949.<sup>215</sup>

Bevin was slightly irritated at the speed and the manner with which matters

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<sup>211</sup>. FO 371/79229/Z1807/1074/72, 28-2-1949, minute by Jebb, 1-3-1949; FO 371/79230/Z1958/1074/72, 4-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 2447, FO to Washington, 3-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 2449, Bevin to Franks, 3-3-1949; FO 371/79231/Z1898/1074/72, 4-3-1949, minute by Shukburgh, 4-3-1949.

<sup>212</sup>. FO 371/79231/Z2021/1074/72, 8-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1329, Franks to FO, 7-3-1949; FO 79232/Z2079/1074/72, 9-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1368, Franks to FO, 8-3-1949; FO 371/79236/Z2369/1074/72, top secret, telegram, no. 1543, Franks to FO, 16-3-1949; FRUS, 1949, Vol. IV, pp. 151-2 and 167; Smith, op. cit., pp. 88-9

<sup>213</sup>. FO 371/79919/ZW50/1071/170, 5-4-1949, WET, 18th meeting, 15-3-1949.

<sup>214</sup>. FO 371/79292/Z3579/1011/22, 9-5-1949, top secret, despatch, no. 144, Mallet to Bevin, 30-4-1949; Breccia, 'L'adesione dell' Italia al Patto Atlantico', *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, 1974, pp. 69-79.

<sup>215</sup>. FO 371/79919/ZW55/1071/170, 5-4-1949, telegram, 137, Franks to FO, 5-4-1949, text of the Italian note of 29-3-1949.

were progressing as he was anxious to get agreement on the military machinery envisaged under Article 9 of the Treaty prior to Italy's involvement and whilst active debate and deliberation on this was still in process.<sup>216</sup> He talked of American heavy-handedness and of the Americans 'jumping the gun'. He was also extremely concerned that the Italian government had lost no time in presenting the US with the request for urgent military supplies to fulfil its NATO obligations, while omitting any acknowledgement that such aid would not exceed the Peace treaty limits. He was concerned that the US seemed indifferent to the omission.<sup>217</sup> Ultimately, however, he was relieved that at last, after so much time and effort, the North Atlantic Treaty was being completed, so he decided not to take exception.<sup>218</sup>

From the moment the Truman Administration endorsed Italian adhesion, any opposition from Britain became irrelevant and counterproductive. The British were not prepared to allow a peripheral matter to undermine the signing of the Treaty. The bottom line was that both the Foreign Office and the Chiefs of Staff knew full well that they could not expect to win a war against the Soviet Union without the manpower and industrial resources of the US. Britain's main objective was to seek America's 'active support in peace and war'. If that

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<sup>216</sup>. FO 371/79232/Z2081/1074/170, 9-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1371, Franks to Bevin, 8-3-1949; top secret, telegram, no. 2739, Bevin to Franks, 9-3-1949; FO 371/79233/Z2178/1074/72, 12-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1449, Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, 11-3-1949.

<sup>217</sup>. FO 371/80070/ZW139/1196/170, 11-4-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 372/08, Washington to FO, 7-4-1949; *ibid.*, ZW210/1196/170, 20-4-1949, confidential, letter, no. 291, Franks to Bevin, 6-4-1949; American reply to the Italian note, 7-4-1949; Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-3.

<sup>218</sup>. Henderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 and 51; FO 371/79232/Z2081/1074/72, 9-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1371, Franks to Bevin, 8-3-1949; top secret, telegram, no. 2739, Bevin to Franks, 9-3-1949, minute by Shuckburgh, 9-3-1949; FO 371/79238/Z2476/1074/72, 8-3-1949, brief for Bevin, 8-3-1949.

meant that it would have to accept Italy as an ally then so be it.<sup>219</sup>

### **Britain and Italy's Role in the Nascent NATO**

Britain accepted Italy's inclusion as an unwelcome inevitability and it devoted its efforts to ensuring the realisation of the military alliance and the military organization<sup>220</sup> which limited involvement to the 'higher direction' of defence planning to Britain, America, Canada and France<sup>221</sup> and at the same time it continued with the existing bilateral secret global planning arrangements it had with the US.<sup>222</sup> Both Britain and France were anxious to incorporate the BTO structure within the new organization because they considered it a means to enhance their status within the alliance<sup>223</sup> by acting as the representatives of

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<sup>219</sup>. CAB 128/15, CM(49)19th Conclusions, item 1, secret, 10-3-1949; CAB 129/32, Part II, top secret, CP(49)37, 'North Atlantic Treaty': note by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, 21-2-1949; CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)61, 14-9-48; Folly, op. cit., pp. 189-191; Peterson, N., 'Bargaining Power among Potential Allies', pp. 198-201; Smith, op. cit., pp. 88-9.

<sup>220</sup>. Ibid. (Article 9 of NATO had provided for the creation of political, military and regional machinery ).

<sup>221</sup>. FO 371/80047/ZW288/1195/170, 21-4-1949, top secret, minute by Shuckburgh, 23-3-1949; top secret, letter, Jebb to Hoyer-Millar, 25-4-1949; top secret, telegram, no. 2422, Franks to Bevin, 29-4-1949; top secret, telegram COS(W)665, MoD to BJSM, 25-4-1949; DEFE 4/21, top secret, COS(49)57th meeting, 20-4-49; DEFE 4/21, top secret, COS(49)62nd meeting, 29-4-49; DEFE 4/23, top secret, COS(49)109th meeting, 28-7-49.

<sup>222</sup>. FO 371/80057/ZW2051/1195/170, 15-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 4410, Franks to FO, 14-9-1949; record of conversation between Bevin and Acheson, 14-9-1949.

<sup>223</sup>. FO 371/80047/ZW80/1195/170, 6-4-1949, record of conversation between Jebb and Hoyer-Millar, 1-4-1949; secret, letter, Hoyer Millar to Shuckburgh, 2-4-1949; *ibid.*, ZW115/1195/170, 12-4-1949, minutes by Jebb, 12-4-1949 and Makins, Sureintending Uner-Secretary of the Economic Relations Department, 15-4-1949; *ibid.*, ZW217/1195/170, 21-4-1949, secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, 13-4-1949; minutes by Jebb, 20-4-1949 and Hayter, 20-4-1949; FO 371/80048/ZW482/1195/170, 18-5-1949, top secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, 10-5-1949; *ibid.*, ZW/472/1195/170, 17-5-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 217, Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, 17-5-1949.

the smaller European nations such as Benelux and Italy.<sup>224</sup>

The granting of NATO membership to Italy did not lead to a radical British reappraisal of Italy's value in either British or allied strategy. To the end, Bevin continued to regard Italian membership as a mistake and his lack of enthusiasm was mirrored in Britain's attitude during the discussions on Italy's place within NATO's overall strategy and peacetime defence planning.<sup>225</sup> The discussions indeed only underlined British fears about the premature inclusion of Italy in the Alliance, namely, the effect upon the military clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty, Italy's perceived indefensibility and its role within the alliance. Bevin sought to prevent Italy from playing an active role in the upper echelons of the nascent military apparatus provided by Article 9. British fears became abundantly clear during late summer and autumn 1949 when the discussions on the establishment of the military machinery of the Alliance began in earnest in Washington.<sup>226</sup> Thereupon, NATO and Britain were faced with Italian demands for military assistance, revision of the military clauses of the Peace Treaty and participation in the highest echelons of the military organization of NATO.

As far as the military organization of NATO was concerned, Britain had

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<sup>224</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>225</sup>. FO 371/80047/ZW80/1195/170, 6-4-1949, record of conversation between Jebb and Hoyer-Millar, 1-4-1949; secret, letter, Hoyer Millar to Shuckburgh, 2-4-1949; FO 371/79346/Z6940/10535/22, 22-10-1949, telegram, no. 1899, confidential, Bevin to Mallet, 21-10-1949; DEFE 4/21, top secret, COS(49)57th meeting, 20-4-49.

<sup>226</sup>. FO 371/80054/ZW1836/1195/170, 1-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 8274, FO to Washington, 31-8-1949; FO 371/80057/ZW2045/1195/170, 14-9-1949, minute by Sir William Strang, 8-9-1949; DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)122(O), 15-10-49; DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)127(Final), 2-11-49; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(49)139(Final)(Revise), 12-3-49; CAB 131/9, top secret, DO(49)88, Annex, top secret, approved at COS 42nd meeting, 15-3-1948; DEFE 4/20, top secret, COS(49)42nd meeting, 15-3-1949.



envisaged that Italy would not participate in the 'Steering Committee' of the alliance but limit its activity to full membership of the Western Mediterranean Regional Planning Group (WMRPG) and associate membership of the Western European Regional Planning Group (WERPG or WEG), i.e. to be brought into consultation only when its own interests were affected or discussed.<sup>227</sup> The British attitude towards Italy was primarily informed by the following assumptions. First, Italian defence was essentially a problem of Mediterranean defence and not a Western European one;<sup>228</sup> Second, Italy was 'valueless militarily', because of the terms of the Peace Treaty and the state of its existing armed forces.<sup>229</sup> Third, even if the restrictions imposed by the Peace Treaty were relaxed and Italy raised larger forces, it would still need external assistance to resist external aggression and the British military authorities were convinced that the Italian armed forces could not put up

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<sup>227</sup>. DEFE 4/23, top secret, COS(49)108th meeting, 28-7-49; FO 371/80052/ZW1781/1195/170, 30-8-1949, top secret, Annex II, telegram, no. 8109, FO to Washington, 26-8-1949; FO 371/80053/ZW/1829/1195/170, 1-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 4152, Franks to FO, 1-9-1949; FO 371/79347/Z7036/10535/22, 27-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1318, Mallet to FO, 21-10-1949, 'Pacciardi Plan'; *ibid.*, Z7062/10535/22, 27-10-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 331, Mallet to FO, 26-10-1949; Ismay, Lord I., *NATO: The First Five Years, 1449-54*, 1954, p. 26.

<sup>228</sup>. DEFE 5/15, Part I, top secret, COS(49)253, 9-7-49; DEFE 5/15, Part II, top secret, COS(49)283, 1-9-49. It was deemed as necessary for Italy to have a role in the regional organization that would be primarily concerned with planning the defence of the Mediterranean lines of communication, the campaigns of Italy and Sicily and the defence of Northern Africa. The role of this body would be complementary to that of the existing planning structures in the Middle East under CINCNELM. This scheme would have the added advantage from the British point of view of enabling CINCNELM to obtain French and Italian cooperation without bringing them into the planning arrangements for the Middle East.

<sup>229</sup>. DEFE 4/23, top secret, confidential Annex, COS(49)120th meeting, 18-8-49; DEFE 6/6, JP(49)75(Final), 10-8-49; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171 (Final), 16-1-1950; FO 371/80054/ZW1836/1195/170, 1-9-1949, minute by Rose, 30-8-1949; *ibid.*, ZW1840/1195/170, 2-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 2354, FO to Washington, 3-9-1949; FO 371/80058/ZW2081/1195/170, 19-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 1686, FO to Ward, 23-9-1949.

effective resistance without the deployment of such numbers of allied forces as to prejudice an effective and successful defence in other theatres, something that neither the alliance as a whole nor Britain in particular could afford.<sup>230</sup> Thus, because of this perception of lack of resources, the Joint Planning Staff and the Chiefs of Staff determined that they must dissuade the Americans from large-scale offers of military assistance to the Italians: much better that the limited resources of the alliance should go to ensuring that the French forces were fully equipped.<sup>231</sup> Fourth, that the alliance had no means to defend its Northern border effectively at this stage.<sup>232</sup> From the allied side, the only support Italy could count on was the American and British forces stationed in Austria and Trieste and naval back up.<sup>233</sup> If war broke out and the Red Army threatened Italy, these forces would be instructed to fight alongside the Italians for as long as it was practical.<sup>234</sup> No other allied land based air forces were to be made available. All the allies were prepared to offer was a strategic air offensive and they believed that a defence of Italy should not be prolonged.<sup>235</sup> Finally, and most ironically, Italy was regarded as a major security

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<sup>230</sup>. DEFE 4/19, top secret, COS(49) 1st meeting, 3-1-1949; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(49)141(Final), 30-12-48; DEFE 5/8, top secret, COS(48)140, 28-10-1948, memorandum by Montgomery, 22-10-1948.

<sup>231</sup>. DEFE 4/23, COS(49)112th meeting, 2-8-49; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)141(Final)(Revise), 30-12-1948, approved at COS(49)1st meeting, 3-1-49; DEFE 5/14, top secret, COS(49)200, 7-6-1949; DEFE 6/8, top secret, JP(49)48(Final), 23-5-949, approved at COS(49)78th meeting, DEFE 4/22, 27-5-1949.

<sup>232</sup>. Ibid.; DEFE 4/23, top secret, COS(49)112th meeting, 2-8-49.

<sup>233</sup>. DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)122(O), 15-10-49; DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)122 (Final), 18-18-49; DEFE 4/25, COS(49)152nd meeting, 21-10-1949; DEFE 6/10, JP(49)127 (Final), 2-11-49.

<sup>234</sup>. DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)139 (Final), approved at DEFE 4/26, top secret, COS(49)171st, meeting, 9-11-49.

<sup>235</sup>. DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171(Final), Annex, 16-1-1950.

risk that could compromise secret defence plans.<sup>236</sup>

In view of all these assumptions the British military considered that the allies' best strategy was for their forces to secure the defence of the Yssel-Rhine-Switzerland line, along the Franco-Italian border and down to the Mediterranean. Consequently, they strongly recommended that Britain should not undertake to provide direct military assistance to Italy in the event of war in the near future and that British forces in the area should not engage themselves in the defence of Italy but simply be ready to withdraw to be deployed on the Franco-Italian border as soon as Northern Italy collapsed.<sup>237</sup>

The Italian government, however had other plans. In its determination to avoid relegation to a second-class position within the Atlantic alliance it actively canvassed the British, French and American governments<sup>238</sup> and declared its interest in becoming a member of the 'Steering Group' and the Western European Group (WEG).<sup>239</sup> As negotiations progressed it showed its determination not to be side-lined by entering a 'reservation' for membership

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<sup>236</sup>. Ibid.; DEFE 5/15, Part I, top secret, COS(49)253, 9-7-49; DEFE 5/15, Part II, top secret, COS(49)283, 1-9-49.

<sup>237</sup>. DEFE 6/6, top secret, JP(48)91(S)Final, 14-9-1948; *ibid.*, top secret, JP(48)92(Final), 14-9-1948; DEFE 6/7, top secret, JP(48)141 (Final), 30-12-1948; DEFE 5/12, top secret, COS(48)200(O), 8-9-48; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171(Final), Annex, 16-1-1950.

<sup>238</sup>. FO 371/80047/ZW204/1195/170, 20-4-1949, minute by Jebb, 14-4-1949, record of conversation between Jebb and Massigli, 14-4-1949; FO 371/80055/ZW1884/1195/170, 5-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 932, Harvey to FO, 3-9-1949; FO 371/80057/ZW2045/1195/170, 14-9-1949, minute by Strang, record of conversation between Gallarati-Scotti with Strang, 8-9-1949; *ibid.*, ZW2059/1195/170, 16-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4446, Franks to FO, 15-9-1949.

<sup>239</sup>. FO 371/80052/ZW1747/1195/170, 26-8-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4053, Franks to FO, 25-8-1949; FO 371/80056/ZW1935/1195/170, 8-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4231, Franks to FO, 7-9-1949; Ortona, *Anni d' America*, pp. 314-5; Smith, *The US, Italy and NATO*, p. 97.

of both the 'Steering Group' and the WEG which thus stalemated the negotiations.<sup>240</sup>

Such intensive Italian diplomatic activity exposed the real intentions of the American and French governments. Both governments wanted Italy excluded from the Steering Group.<sup>241</sup> The Americans went so far as to instruct Dunn to warn Sforza that if he persisted in his demand he would only succeed in harming Italy's interests.<sup>242</sup> When Sforza disregarded this warning he was pressured by Acheson to withdraw his reservation.<sup>243</sup> In turn Sforza tried to bargain with him and make his dropping of the claim to the 'Steering Group' conditional upon American support for Italian membership to the WEG. Acheson was however personally opposed to Italian inclusion in that group as well, but decided not to convey his views directly to Sforza but to tell him that this was a matter for the BTO powers. Thus, Sforza came to the realisation that if Italy were to participate in the WEG it would have to direct its efforts towards enlisting British and French support.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>240</sup>. NARA RG 59, 840.2, Box: C. 513, top secret, letter, Bohlen to Acheson, 31-3-1949; *ibid.*, Box: C. 514, letter, Dunn to Acheson, 1-6-1949; *ibid.*, Box: C. 515 Dunn to Marshall, 7-6-1949; *ibid.*, State Department memorandum, 22-8-1949; FO 371/80056/ZW1967/1195/170, 10-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4283, Franks to FO, 9-9-1949; FO 371/80057/ZW2016/1195/170, 13-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4326, Franks to FO, 12-9-1949; *ibid.*, ZW2047/1195/170, 15-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4363, Franks to FO, 15-9-1949.

<sup>241</sup>. FO 371/80055/ZW1884/1195/170, 5-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 932, Harvey to FO, 3-9-1949; FO 371/80056/ZW1935/1195/170, 8-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4231, Franks to FO, 7-9-1949.

<sup>242</sup>. NARA RG 59, 840.2, Box: C. 515, top secret, letter, Acheson to Dunn, 26-8-1949; FO 371/80054/ZW1844/1195/170, 2-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 4170, Franks to FO, 1-9-1949.

<sup>243</sup>. FO 371/80057/ZW2059/1195/170, 16-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4446, Franks to FO, 15-9-1949; NARA RG 59, 840.2, Box: C. 515, top secret, letter, Acheson to Dunn, 3-9-1949.

<sup>244</sup>. *Ibid.*; Sforza, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-71.

The French for their part wished to ensure that the defence of the Rhine and the Alps were both pursued with equal vigour and treated by the alliance as 'indivisible' and as a result they deemed it militarily important that Italy was given a role within the WEG. Schuman also wanted to use WEG as a palliative for the ill-feeling resulting from Italy's exclusion from the Steering Group.<sup>245</sup> However, the French government was not prepared to go as far as Bonnet had done in Washington, where he had actively campaigned for Italy's full membership to the WEG. Indeed, the French wanted Italy to receive only an 'observer' status, which would give it even less clout than the British proposals.<sup>246</sup> Thus, Paul Ramadier, the French Minister of Defence endorsed the British proposals without further debate.<sup>247</sup> The Benelux countries too, were adamantly against Italy's full membership of the WEG.<sup>248</sup> When the matter was discussed again in Washington, Italy received neither French nor American support, with the result that it was the only major European country not to be given full but only participating membership of the WEG.<sup>249</sup>

As a remedy for Italy's injured sensibilities, Bonnet proposed that the WMRPG ought to be renamed the Southern European-Western-Mediterranean Regional Planning Group (SE-WMRPG) and its competence be extended so as to cover not only the air and sea defence of the Western Mediterranean, but also the

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<sup>245</sup>. FO 371/80047/ZW204/1195/170, 20-4-1949, minute by Jebb, 14-4-1949; FO 371/80055/ZW1884/1195/170, 5-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 932, Harvey to FO, 3-9-1949.

<sup>246</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>247</sup>. FO 371/80056/ZW1906/1195/170, 7-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 938, Harvey to FO, 6-9-1949.

<sup>248</sup>. Ibid., ZW1840/1195/170, 2-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4155, Franks to FO, 1-9-1949.

<sup>249</sup>. Ismay, op. cit., p. 25; FO 371/80056/ZW1935/1195/170, 8-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4231, Franks to FO, 7-9-1949.

land defence of Southern Europe and Italy.<sup>250</sup> The British immediately supported the proposal and the name and competences of the group were thereupon altered.<sup>251</sup> The Italians were satisfied by this development but they were still unhappy at being refused full membership of WEG. As an alternative, they formulated a set of proposals aimed at affording them fuller access to the planning deliberations of the WEG by reconfiguring it, either through amalgamation with the WMRPG or by splitting it into two sub-groups.<sup>252</sup>

Britain, France and the US rejected these proposals out of hand on military grounds.<sup>253</sup> The Italians came up with a further proposal which provided for combined meetings of any two regional planning groups for the purpose of coordination. Britain accepted this proposal not because of its merits but merely because it wanted to accommodate Italy and because it thought it would settle the matter of Italy's association with the military machinery of NATO.<sup>254</sup>

Bevin was surprised when he met Sforza at the NATO meeting in Washington on 16 September and heard him once again lay a claim to full membership of the WEG. Bevin firmly told him that this was out of the question. Sforza then proposed an amendment of the original Italian proposal to reflect the fact that the problem of European defence was a common one from the North Sea to the Adriatic. Bevin rejected this idea too because he felt that it would be

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<sup>250</sup>. Ibid., ZW1906/1195/170, 7-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 938, Harvey to FO, 6-9-1949; *ibid.*, ZW1993/1195/170, 13-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 4327, Franks to FO, 12-9-1949.

<sup>251</sup>. Ibid., top secret, telegram, no. 8692, FO to Washington, 13-9-1949.

<sup>252</sup>. FO 371/80057/ZW2059/1195/170, 16-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4446, Franks to FO, 15-9-1949.

<sup>253</sup>. Ibid., top secret, telegram, no. 8850, FO to Washington, 16-9-1949; DEFE 4/27, top secret, COS(49)176th meeting, 24-11-49.

<sup>254</sup>. Ibid.

interpreted by friend and foe alike to mean that the NATO powers were not interested in what happened east of that line and that it would antagonize, expose and demoralize Greece and Turkey.<sup>255</sup> Bevin, with the British Embassy in Washington, worked on a new proposal which would meet some of Italy's concerns. The eventual compromise provided for full cooperation among the European Planning Groups by making arrangements for combined meetings between any two or even three groups should the need arise.<sup>256</sup> Sforza found that the British wording fell short of his *desiderata* and attempted to improve on it by proposing the creation of a Military Committee for the European Groups that would be ultimately answerable to the Military Committee of the Alliance. America, Britain, France and the Benelux countries combined spontaneously to defeat this proposal fearing that it would complicate the allied military machinery and short circuit the Steering Group.<sup>257</sup> Eventually, Sforza accepted the compromise proposal which, with Bevin's support, gave the Defence Committee the task of ensuring the full cooperation of the European Groups. This was to make it more appealing to the Italians. Thereafter, Sforza dropped all claims to Italian membership of the WEG.<sup>258</sup> The SE-WMRPG was to be the only military machinery of the alliance to which Italy was accorded full membership. The other members were Britain, France and, after British and Italian insistence, the US as a consulting member.<sup>259</sup> The main task of the

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<sup>255</sup>. FO 371/80058/ZW2078/1195/170, 17-9-1947, secret, telegram, no. 4473, Franks to FO, 16-9-1949.

<sup>256</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>257</sup>. FO 371/80058/ZW2097/1195/170, 19-9-1949, secret, telegram, no. 4506, Franks to FO, record of the Working Party meetings of 18th and 19th September, 19-9-1949.

<sup>258</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>259</sup>. FO 371/80057/ZW2039/1195/170, secret, telegram, no. 4326, Franks to FO, 13-9-1949; *ibid.*, ZW2051/1195/170, 15-9-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 4446, Franks to FO, 14-9-1949; DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)113(Final), 26-9-49; Ismay, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

group was to ascertain the feasibility of defending and holding Italy in the case of Soviet attack.<sup>260</sup>

As soon as Italy's exclusion from the power centre of NATO's military machinery became publicly known, the Italian Press reflected its disappointment in a series of articles which accused the Western Union powers of trying to 'reduce Italy to a position of moral inferiority'.<sup>261</sup> The Italian newspapers, however, reserved their most vitriolic attacks for Britain which was blamed for obstructionism and selfishness and matters became worse when even Sforza adopted a critical attitude towards Britain.<sup>262</sup> The anti-British Press campaign culminated in a bitter, direct and offensive attack on Britain and its government by the *Giornale d' Italia*.<sup>263</sup> The close relationship between the newspaper and the Foreign Ministry and the fact that both Sforza and Zoppi had expressed dissatisfaction with the state of Anglo-Italian relations led the Foreign Office to suspect that the whole campaign was being orchestrated from inside the *Palazzo Chigi*.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>260</sup>. DEFE 5/8, top secret, COS(49)378, 5-11-49; DEFE 5/17, top secret, COS(49)340, 12-10-1949; DEFE 4/24, top secret, COS(49)142nd meeting, 26-9-1949.

<sup>261</sup>. FO 371/80058/ZW2080/1195/170, 19-9-1949, telegram, no. 1139, Ward to FO, 19-9-1949.

<sup>262</sup>. FO 371/79346/Z6708/10535/22, 14-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 272, Mallet to FO, 8-10-1949; *Corriere della Sera*, 6-10-1949; *Messaggero*, 6-10-1949.

<sup>263</sup>. FO 371/80060/ZW2421/10535/170, 20-10-1949, restricted, telegram, no. 1298, Mallet to FO, 17-10-1949; FO 371/79347/Z7062/10535/22, 27-10-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 331, Rome to FO; *ibid.*, Z6973/10535/22, 25-10-1949, telegram, no. 1329, Mallet to FO, 21-10-1949.

<sup>264</sup>. *Ibid.*; FO 371/79346/Z6709/10535/170, 14-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1265, Mallet to FO, 13-10-1949; *ibid.*, Z6902/10535/170, 22-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1310, Mallet to FO, 21-10-1949.



Bevin was apoplectic. He had spent some pleasant moments with Sforza, both socially and professionally, in Washington and on the *Queen Elizabeth* on their way back to Europe. It was simply beyond his comprehension that Sforza and his associates would single out both him and Britain for such vitriolic attacks in the press, or as he put it, to 'howl at us like this', when he had helped Italy to get a fair deal and when his attitude towards Italian inclusion in the military machinery of NATO was identical to that of the US and the BTO powers.<sup>265</sup> He was even more upset when he recalled that he had had to convince the British Military to adopt a less harsh line towards Italy at a time when its attitude had become particularly entrenched; the Foreign Office had had to remind them that if Britain wanted to secure the best possible military organization for its interests it would have to make concessions to the *amour propre* of the smaller countries and, indeed, Italy.<sup>266</sup> Bevin sent a brusque, defiant and unequivocal telegram to Mallet in which he chastised him for not being fully appreciative of the positive elements in British policy towards Italy, before concluding that no matter what he did for Italy he would always be pilloried in the Italian Press and that he was not prepared to be 'blackmailed about the Communist opposition for ever'.<sup>267</sup>

Sforza tried to mollify Bevin who was still fuming, by stating that his main concern was to improve relations between the two countries<sup>268</sup> and by affirming that, despite appearances, he and his officials had had no part in the anti-

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<sup>265</sup>. FO 371/79346/Z6940/10535/170, 22-10-1949, rough draft dictated by Bevin, 20-10-1949; confidential, telegram, no. 1899, Bevin to Mallet, 21-10-1949.

<sup>266</sup>. FO 371/80053/ZW1816/1195/170 31-8-1949, secret, letter, Jebb to Brigadier A.T. Cornwall-Jones, MoD, 30-8-1949; secret, telegram, no. 4110, Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, 30-8-1949.

<sup>267</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>268</sup>. FO 371/79347/Z7062/10535/22, 27-10-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 331, Rome to FO, 26-10-1949.

British campaign of the *Giornale d' Italia*.<sup>269</sup> But before the damage could be repaired, the contents of Bevin's telegram were leaked to the Press by the British Embassy in Washington which resulted in a sensationalistic *Newsweek* article entitled 'Spanking Ernie'.<sup>270</sup> This unfortunate development resulted in a further barrage of vicious anti-British press coverage in Italy which damaged Anglo-Italian relations at a very delicate moment.<sup>271</sup>

The NATO powers at this stage were immersed in discussions to decide suitable locations for the regional planning groups. London had hoped to host all three of the European Planning Groups, including the SE-WMRPG. Rome and Paris also vied for the location because they believed that it was important, for psychological reasons, to have high powered NATO institutions based on the Continent and not just in London, in order to reassure their citizens that in the event of a major conflagration they would be robustly defended.<sup>272</sup> Italy was especially vocal on this point. As Randolfo Pacciardi, the Italian Minister of Defence and Sforza put it, they must have 'something tangible, something visible' to sustain Italy's morale in view of its vulnerability to an attack and which would be less likely if NATO forces were assembled on the other side of

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<sup>269</sup>. Ibid., Z6902/10535/170, 22-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1310, Mallet to FO, 21-10-1949; ibid., Z6933/10535/170, 24-10-1949, telegram, no. 1326, Mallet to FO, 22-10-1949; minute by Bevin, 28-10-1949, 'I do not believe him'.

<sup>270</sup>. FO 371/79347/Z7146/10535/170, 3-11-1949, confidential, telegram, 2013, FO to Rome, 3-11-1949; ibid., Z7210/10535/170, 4-11-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1183, Franks to Bevin, 4-11-1949; *Newsweek*, article, 3-11-1949.

<sup>271</sup>. *Messaggero*, 26-10-1949; *Avanti!*, 26-10-1949; *Corriere della Sera*, 9-11-1949; FO 371/79347/Z7241/10535/170, 7-11-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1183, Harvey for Bevin to Franks, 7-11-1949.

<sup>272</sup>. Ibid., Z7062/10535/170, 27-10-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 331, Rome to FO, 26-10-1949; ibid., Z7036/19535/170, 27-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1318, Mallet to FO, 21-10-1949; FO 371/80060/ZW2347/1195/170, 20-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 241, Ashley-Clarke, charge d' affaires, Paris to FO, 18-10-1949.

the Alps.<sup>273</sup>

After much encouragement from the US, the Italians acknowledged that they would not object to London as the location for the SE-WMRPG. Their only reservation was that Rome should be the home of a subsidiary organization of this group, to reassure its Parliament and public opinion that Italy's adherence to NATO had fully rehabilitated the country internationally and that Italy would not be treated as the poor relation of the alliance. The British by now were all too happy to offer such assurances.<sup>274</sup> The British government assumed that it would have the support of the US.<sup>275</sup> Acheson, however, during a visit to Paris, concluded that the French would be mortally offended if at least one of the military organizations was not located in Paris. Thus the US threw its support behind Paris.<sup>276</sup> In this, the Americans carried the support of the Italians who had backtracked on promises they had given to the British. As a result, Paris became the host of the SE-WMRPG and Italy the location for the Military Working Group of the SE-WMRPG.<sup>277</sup> Italian manoeuvres raised a few

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<sup>273</sup>. FO 371/80059/ZW2298/1195/170, 10-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 4831, Franks to FO, record of a meeting between General Morgan and Pacciardi, Italian Minister of Defence, 7-10-1949; FO 371/80060/ZW2422/1195/170, 20-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1305, Mallet to FO, 19-10-1949.

<sup>274</sup>. Ibid.; ZW2481/1195/170, 24-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 5003, Franks to FO, 20-10-1949; ZW2482/1195/170, 24-10-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 1318, Mallet to FO, 21-10-1949; FO 371/80062/ZW2068/1195/170, 1-11-1949, minute by Shuckburgh, 29-10-1949.

<sup>275</sup>. Ibid., ZW2618/1195/170, 1-11-1949, secret, telegram, no. 5149, Franks to FO, 31-10-1949.

<sup>276</sup>. Ibid., ZW2731/1195/170, 9-11-1949, secret, telegram, no. 5264, Franks to FO, 8-11-1949.

<sup>277</sup>. Ibid., ZW2815/1195/170, 17-11-1949, NATO Communique, 8-11-1949, Western Department to Washington, 25-11-1949; DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)122 (O) (Final), 18-10-49; DEFE 5/17, top secret, COS(49)340, 12-10-1949; DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)127(O) (Final), 2-11-49.

eyebrows in the Foreign Office, but did not create significant offence.<sup>278</sup>

As discussions between NATO members began on future defence planning for 1950 it became obvious that the British had not changed their position that the Italian armed forces ought to be strengthened within the Peace Treaty limits. To achieve this, Britain advocated that the Italians should be given assistance in the form of advice, equipment and training but at the same time Italy could not depend on NATO troops to defend it.<sup>279</sup> The British government's main emphasis remained on concentrating resources to defend areas that it considered of paramount importance for the defence of the realm and the Empire. Cutting expenditure to what was absolutely necessary had been the feature of all post-1946 defence plans and the British government was not prepared to jeopardize its economy further to accommodate lost causes.<sup>280</sup> The British military still perceived Italy as indefensible in the event of the outbreak of a major war.<sup>281</sup> The Italian line of defence along the Piave River and the Alpine passes from Austria could be held only if significant numbers of allied forces were diverted to Italy. There was no other option for as long as the Peace Treaty was in force. The manpower resources at the disposal of Western European powers were limited and as a consequence the diversion of such forces to the defence of Italy would weaken the other fronts. Thus the

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<sup>278</sup>. FO 371/80069/ZW3388/1195/170, 28-12-1949, confidential, letter, Rome to FO, 22-12-1948.

<sup>279</sup>. DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)127 (Final), 2-11-1949; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171 (Final), top secret, Annex, 16-1-1950.

<sup>280</sup>. DEFE 4/10, top secret, COS(48)18th meeting, 4-2-1948; *ibid.*, top secret, COS(48)16th meeting, 2-2-1948; DEFE 5/10, top secret, COS(48)26(O), 30-1-1948; CAB 131/4, top secret, DO(47)44, 22-5-1947; CAB 128/12, CM19(48), 5-3-1948.

<sup>281</sup>. DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)127(Final), 2-11-1949; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)152(Final), 25-11-1949.

British military regarded the defence of Italy as an essentially Italian matter<sup>282</sup> and suggested that the best course of action was to encourage the Italians to defend their country to the best of their ability, although privately it did not think much of their chances.<sup>283</sup> This prognosis was based not only on the assumption that the restrictions of the Treaty had curbed Italy's ability to defend itself but also on the fact that the existing Italian armed forces were essentially both ill-balanced and poorly equipped.<sup>284</sup> The air forces available for the defence of the country were also limited and most of the aircraft at Italy's disposal were obsolescent British and American stock.<sup>285</sup> The political significance of these conclusions did not escape the Foreign Office. The Italians would be greatly disaffected once they realised that in the event of a major war breaking out in Europe they could count on precious little help from their NATO allies. The Foreign Office accepted the conclusions of the military experts but insisted that the alliance would have to include the defence of

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<sup>282</sup>. DEFE 6/10, top secret, JP(49)127 (Final), 2-11-1949; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171 (Final), Annex, 16-1-1950.

<sup>283</sup>. DEFE 4/23, top secret, COS(49)120th meeting, 18-8-1949; DEFE 6/8, top secret, JP(49)32(Final), 31-3-1949; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171 (Final), 16-1-1950; FO 371/79346/4359/10535/22, 16-6-1949, despatch, no. 188, confidential, Mallet to Bevin, 16-6-1949. As Mallet put it 'military virtues are not the strongest of the many good points of the Italian people'.

<sup>284</sup>. DEFE 4/23, top secret, COS(49)120th meeting, confidential, Annex, 18-8-1949; DEFE 6/8, top secret, JP(49)32(Final), 10-8-1949; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171 (Final), 16-1-1950; FO 371/79219/Z78/1074/72, 5-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 48, Bevin to Franks, 4-1-1949; *ibid.*, Z138/1074/72, 7-1-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 26, Mallet to FO, 6-1-1949. The land forces available for the defence of Italy were seven infantry divisions, of which only one was fully established, three alpine regiments and an armoured brigade. Their equipment was largely British but dating back to the wartime period and supplies were short. The Italian Armed forces were also lacking in supporting arms and administrative support. Above all the Italian Government could not find funds to spare from its budget even for improvements with Treaty limits.

<sup>285</sup>. At that time, the Italian air force was made of 113 fighters, sixty four fighters in reserve fifty six transport planes (plus 15 in reserve and fourteen sea rescue craft (6 in reserve)

Northern Italy in its defence planning at the earliest feasible time.<sup>286</sup>

The British were not alone in their conclusions. The Americans viewed Italy as an integral part of any Western defence planning. They expected the WEG to keep the enemy west of the Rhine and the SE-WMRPG to provide for the defence of the NATO areas of the Mediterranean and Northern Africa and to keep the enemy in Italy as far to the East and North as possible and to protect the western lines of communication in the Mediterranean.<sup>287</sup> At the same time, however, they knew it was unlikely that adequate allied forces could be raised to repel a Soviet invasion and maintain order in Italy in the face of civil disorder provoked by the PCI. Their plans were not that different from those of their British counterparts and provided for allied troop withdrawal from Austria and Trieste into Northern Italy. The task of the allied troops would be to fight alongside Italian forces for as long as possible, falling back as necessary to support the Italians in their defence of Sicily. At least for the time being, the defence of Northern Italy should be shelved until it became a 'practical possibility'.<sup>288</sup> NATO plans for the defence of Italy for 1951-52 were also based on the assumption that Northern Italy could not be held successfully and it was deemed to be more important to hold the French Alps. However, the radicalization the Korean War had wrought on American foreign policy and the American commitment to the defence of Europe as manifested by the creation of the integrated command and the massive increase in American military

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<sup>286</sup>. DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)171(Final), Annex, 16-1-1950.

<sup>287</sup>. Smith, *The US, Italy and NATO*, pp. 90-2, 104 and 143-65; FO 371/80065/ZW2866/1195/170, 21-11-1949, BJSM to MOD, top secret, telegram, JSM(645), 18-11-1949; DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)149 (Final), 20-11-49. This did not curb the British military. DEFE 6/11, top secret, JP(49)152 (Final), 25-11-49.

<sup>288</sup>. DEFE 4/23, top secret, COS(49)112th meeting, 2-8-49; CAB 131/9, top secret, DO(49)16th meeting, 21-7-1949

production soon changed this situation.<sup>289</sup>

## Conclusion

Once Bevin had succeeded in interesting the US sufficiently enough to enter negotiations for the creation of NATO, the British concentrated their efforts on getting the type of pact that was suited to their long-term policy objectives.<sup>290</sup> In this scheme of things Italy was seen to be superfluous to requirements. Its defence was deemed to be desirable but not essential.<sup>291</sup> Italy brought with it a whole set of problems that the British did not wish to tackle at this time as these could not be resolved without modifying the Peace Treaty which Britain had signed only two years ago<sup>292</sup> and any such step would provide the Soviet Union with propaganda currency.<sup>293</sup> There was also the fear that the inclusion of weak countries would weaken the alliance and would disperse supplies and manpower resources to such a degree as to undermine the capacity for defending the main fronts. Thus, the British government consistently opposed the inclusion of Italy into the North Atlantic Pact, even when the French

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<sup>289</sup>. Elwood, D.W., 'Italy, Europe and the Cold War: The Politics and Economics of Limited Sovereignty', in Duggan, C., and Wagstaff, C., *Italy in the Cold War: Politics, Culture and Society, 1948-58*, Oxford, 1995, pp. 36-41; Nuti, op. cit., pp. 205-240; Gaddis, J.L., *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy*, New York, 1982, pp. 89-126; Smith, op. cit., pp. 104-176, passim.

<sup>290</sup>. Henderson, op. cit., pp. 39 and 51; Petersen, 'Who Pulled Whom', p. 251.

<sup>291</sup>. DEFE 6/6, JP(48)92(Final), 14-9-48; DEFE 5/12, COS(48)200(O), 8-9-48.

<sup>292</sup>. DEFE 4/25, top secret, COS(49)155th meeting, 10-10-49; DEFE 5/16, top secret, COS(49)327, 4-10-49; FO 371/73172/Z5320/167/22, 30-6-1948, secret, letter, Ward to Crosthwaite, 24-6-1948; FO 371/79349/Z7984/10535/22, 8-12-1949, confidential, despatch, no. 739, Mallet to Attlee, 1-12-1949; DEFE 5/16, top secret, COS(49)327, 'Policy towards the Italian Armed Forces, 4-10-49.

<sup>293</sup>. FO 371/79240, Mallet to FO, 22-3-1948; FRUS, 1948, Vol. IV, pp. 261-5; Smith, *The US, Italy and NATO*, pp. 93-4.

dropped their opposition and became fervent supporters of Italian adhesion. When the US decided that Italy must be included because of political considerations the British decided to acquiesce, but only grudgingly.<sup>294</sup> By 1949, signing the alliance with the United states had eclipsed every other priority and objective. If Italy was to be part and parcel of the achievement of this ultimate priority then Britain saw it as a price it had to pay. Even after Italy had become one of the founding members of NATO, Britain continued to try to minimize its influence and role within the organization because of its supposed vulnerability and its perceived potential to compromise strategic planning secrets.<sup>295</sup> The advent of the Korean War brought with it a concomitant and whole-hearted American commitment to NATO which was to affect the attitudes of the British. Up to then, the question of Italian inclusion in the North Atlantic pact generated a great deal of discussion within the British government and it emerges clearly from documents that British policy makers tried hard to assess the arguments for and against Italian membership from the standpoint of British interests and western defence. Despite claims that Britain sought to exclude Italy because it could not reconcile itself to including an enemy,<sup>296</sup> the British acted as they did because they judged Italian inclusion as inessential, not conducive to their interests and because they viewed NATO as essentially a military organization which was not to be used to resolve

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<sup>294</sup>. FO 371/79229/Z1807/1074/72, 28-2-1949, minute by Jebb, 1-3-1949; FO 371/79230/Z1958/1074/72, 4-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 2447, FO to Washington, 3-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 2449, Bevin to Franks, 3-3-1949; FO 371/79231/Z1898/1074/72, 4-3-1949, minute by Shukburgh, 4-3-1949; FO 371/79232/Z2081/1074/170, 9-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1371, Franks to Bevin, 8-3-1949; top secret, telegram, no. 2739, Bevin to Franks, 9-3-1949; FO 371/79233/Z2178/1074/72, 12-3-1949, top secret, telegram, no. 1449, Hoyer-Millar to Jebb, 11-3-1949.

<sup>295</sup>. DEFE 5/15, Part I, top secret, COS(49)253, 9-7-49; DEFE 5/15, Part II, top secret, COS(49)283, 1-9-49.

<sup>296</sup>. Gat, op. cit., p. 181.



political problems.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>297</sup>. FO 371/79221/Z436/1074/72, 15-1-1949, minute by Jebb, 13-1-1949; FO 371/79222/Z677/1074, 24-1-1949, brief for Bevin's conversation with the Italian Ambassador prepared by Jebb, 17-1-1949; FO 371/79225/1430/1074/72, 16-2-1949, minute by McNeil, 11-1-1949.

## Chapter Five

### Italy's Role in British Plans for European Cooperation

In the mid-1940s Britain was still a great power with global interests. Necessity steered Britain into adopting a multi-faceted foreign policy which would expedite and serve its interests. The Atlanticist line and Britain's quest for a peace time pact with America<sup>1</sup> was a strand but not the only strand of British foreign policy. The preservation of Britain's imperial position and the maintenance of its global power were equally important considerations and the achievement of these interests rested on the successful creation of a British-led bloc of powers that maintained equidistance from the superpowers.<sup>2</sup> On his return from Potsdam, Bevin was briefed by the Foreign Office on its plans for the creation of such a grouping which would be based on close Anglo-French cooperation. The Foreign Secretary found the premise of European cooperation as attractive and as interesting as the first time he had heard it as

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<sup>1</sup>. Anderson, *op. cit.*; Bullock, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 and 840; Frankel, J., *British Foreign Policy, 1945-73*, London, 1975; Morgan, K.O., *Labour in Power, 1945-51*, London, 1984; Pelling, H., *The British Labour Governments, 1945-51*, London, 1984; Ovendale, R., *The English Speaking Alliance: Britain, the United States, the Dominions and the Cold War, 1945-51*, London, 1985.

<sup>2</sup>. Dockrill, and Young, (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 47-56; Greenwood, S., *Britain, and European Cooperation since 1945*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 7-17; Greenwood, S., *The Alternative Alliance: Anglo-French Relations Before the Coming of NATO*, London, 1996; Greenwood, S., 'The Third Force in the Late 1940's', in Brivati, B., and Jones, H., *From Reconstruction to Integration: Britain and Europe since 1945*, Leicester, 1993, pp. 59-70; Kent, J., *Britain's Imperial Strategy and the Origins of the Cold War, 1944-45*, Leicester, 1993; Kent, 'The British Empire and the Origins of the Cold War', pp. 166-77; Schlaim, A., *Britain and the Origins of European Unity, 1940-51*, Reading, 1978, pp. 115-42; Warner, G., 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', pp. 61-82; Young, J.W., *Britain France and the Unity of Europe, 1945-51*, Leicester, 1984, *passim*; Young, J.W., *Britain and European Unity, 1945-1992*, London, 1993, pp. 6-27; CAB 128/14, CM(48)19 Conclusions, confidential, Annex, 5-3-1948; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, 1947-48, Vol. 456, Cols. 96-107, London, 1948.

a Minister for Labour in Churchill's wartime government.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless he approached the matter with caution because he was unsure about the reactions not only of his colleagues within the government but also of those of the Americans and the Soviet Union, so he made it clear to his officials that he wanted the matter kept secret, 'inside the walls of the Office', at this stage.<sup>4</sup> Within the safety of the 'Office' he stated that his long term policy was:

to establish close relations between this country and the countries of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic fringes of Europe, e.g. more especially Greece, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Scandinavia. [He wanted] to see close association between the United Kingdom and these countries as much in commercial and economic matters as in political questions.<sup>5</sup>

This scheme necessitated the cooption of Europe and the underpinning of the British imperial position in the Mediterranean by frustrating any real or perceived Soviet encroachment. The position of Italy as, simultaneously a Western European and Mediterranean nation, and a country which was perceived to be under threat from a massive Communist Party made it an obvious candidate for inclusion into Britain's European schemes. As early as 1945 Bevin had identified Italy as one of the nations to be included in a British-led Western European Group. Relations between Britain and Italy both mirrored and manifested the former's attempts at pushing for European cooperation and the course of this relationship yields interesting insights into the development and failure of the Western Union idea and Britain's subsequent retreat from Europe. The inclusion of Italy could be justified on

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<sup>3</sup>. Greenwood, S., 'Ernest Bevin, France and "Western Union", 1945-46', *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 14, 1984, pp. 322-6; Greenwood, *Britain, and European Cooperation*, pp. 7-10; Young, *Britain and European Unity*, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>. FO 371/49069/Z9595/13/G, 21-8-1945, minute by P. Dixon, Bevin's private secretary, 17-8-1945.

<sup>5</sup>. Ibid., minute by Hoyer-Millar, 21-8-1945; Annex: FO minute, 13-8-1945.

many counts. First, to ensure its Western orientation; second, to facilitate the continuation of British influence in the area; and third, to secure certain strategic concerns because of Italy's pivotal position in the Mediterranean.<sup>6</sup> There was a fourth reason which was that the creation of a bloc including Western European and Mediterranean countries could ensure against a German military resurgence and against the possibility of Russian infiltration into areas of traditional British influence. Future relations with Italy, Greece and France formed a major concern for the Foreign Office. The aim was to establish, as Bevin put it, 'as far as possible workable understandings with a group of friendly countries around Germany'.<sup>7</sup> Bevin's policy was steeped in economic considerations too. He was trying to ensure British economic independence from America in case the Truman administration adopted economic isolationism and he was hoping to influence and raise the level of economic activity within the UK. He believed that close cooperation with Italy and France, whose economies were primarily agricultural, could improve 'the balance between industry and agriculture' in Britain.<sup>8</sup> For these reasons, Italy was seen as being important to British strategic, colonial, economic and political interests:

Italy's strategic position in the Mediterranean makes it important

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<sup>6</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/43335/N2409/183/38, 21-4-1944, minute by E. O. Skaife, USSR Section, Research Department of the Foreign Office, (FORD), 5-4-1944; ibid., N2883/183/38, 12-5-1944, top secret, PHP(43)1(O), Post-Hostilities Planning Committee, Revised Draft, 24-4-1944; PREM 8/515, top secret, COS(46)43(O), 13-2-46; CAB 131/1, top secret, DO(46)5, 15-2-1946; ibid, top secret, DO(46) 8, 18-3-1946 Greenwood, S., 'The Third Force in the Late 1940's', pp.57-70; Kent, 'British Policy', pp. 139-52; Kent, 'The British Empire and the Origins of the Cold War', pp. 115-42.

<sup>7</sup>. Greenwood, 'Ernest Bevin, France and "Western Union", 1945-46', pp. 322-6; Greenwood, *The Alternative Alliance*, pp. 56-7; Rothwell, op. cit., pp. 406-13.

<sup>8</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/45731/UE3683/3683/53, 18-8-1945, minute by Sir E. Hall-Patch, Superintending Under-Secretary of Far Eastern Economic and Industrial Planning Department, 10-8-1945; ibid., UE3689/3683/53, 17-8-1945, top secret, FO memorandum, 17-8-1945; British Library, Sir Oliver Harvey Papers, Diary Entry: 13-8-1945.

that SHE COULD NOT (sic) come under the influence of a potential enemy. Our Mediterranean communications could be seriously threatened from Metropolitan Italy... It is therefore to our military interests to have a friendly Italy who would look to Britain and Western Europe for support.<sup>9</sup>

During 1946-47, Bevin continued to work towards the creation of the 'Third Force'. His ideas took a while to come to fruition. He was concerned not to encourage an untimely withdrawal of the Americans from Europe and not to antagonize the Soviet Union unduly.<sup>10</sup> British economic weakness and the emergence of bipolarity slowed the process. He also had to overcome resistance from within the Labour government. The responses of the Treasury and the Board of Trade (BoT) were disheartening and obstructive. Both Dalton and Sir Stafford Cripps, the President of the BoT, were preoccupied with pressing financial matters connected with the abrupt cessation of Lend Lease and Britain's mounting financial crisis. Reviving the British economy was their priority by using the American loan of 1946 prudently and not giving the impression to the Americans that in reality Britain was not in need of their financial help. Neither Department was prepared to do anything that could impair the delicate and precarious balance of Anglo-American relations. The position of the two ministries hardened as the economic and financial crisis deepened. Duff Cooper, the British Ambassador to Paris remarked at a later date, that the mere words customs union produced 'a shudder in the Treasury and nausea in the BoT'.<sup>11</sup> The economic sections of the Foreign Office were

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<sup>9</sup>. Ibid.; PREM 8/515, COS(46)43(O), 13-2-1946.

<sup>10</sup>. FO 371/73045/Z703/273/72, 27-1-1948, minute by W.N. Hogg addressed to Bevin, 19-1-1948; Greenwood, *The Alternative Alliance*, pp. 56-7; In fact, Bevin throughout 1945 and until the signing of the Treaty of Dunkirk in 1947, he had kept Stalin informed of his desire to establish security arrangements with his European neighbours and Stalin had made it clear that he would not raise any objections so long such arrangements did not conceal an anti-Soviet focus.

<sup>11</sup>. Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget*, 1954, pp. 337-84, *passim*.

also unsympathetic to Bevin's plans. Sir Edmund Hall-Patch, Britain's Permanent Representative to the OEEC, complained of lack of consultation. Roger Makins, the Superintending Under-Secretary of the Economic Relations Department of the Foreign Office, derided the idea of such a European 'spiritual union' as a vague and ill-defined project. He also warned that such a scheme would badly erode Britain's influence in world affairs, sap away its industrial and economic potential and weaken its links with the Commonwealth.<sup>12</sup>

### **Britain and the Issue of Italian Membership of the Treaty of Brussels**

Despite his colleagues' doubts and however slow he was in its achievement, Bevin still believed that the 'Third Force' scheme was feasible and Italy was one of the countries he wanted involved in the plan. In his Western Union speech Bevin declared:

I hope that treaties will be signed with our near neighbours, the Benelux countries making our treaty with France an important nucleus in Western Europe. We have then to go beyond the circle of our immediate neighbours. We shall have to consider the question of associating other historic members of the European civilization, including new Italy....<sup>13</sup>

In his Cabinet Paper, 'The Threat to Western Civilization', Bevin wrote that Italy would have to be included in the Western Union. The only unresolved matter as far as Italy was concerned was the timing of its admittance.<sup>14</sup>

Anglo-Italian relations had changed since 1945. Italy was no longer on its knees and Britain was not as powerful as it once had been. Due to its

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<sup>12</sup>. FO 371/73045/Z809/273/72, 30-1-48, minutes by Hall Patch, 15-1-1948 and Makins, 21-1-1948.

<sup>13</sup>. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, Vol. 446, Cols. 387-409, 1947-48, London, 1948.

<sup>14</sup>. CAB 129/25, CM(48)72, top secret, memorandum by Bevin, 3-3-1948.

economic and financial problems, post-war Britain had encouraged American involvement in Italian affairs in order to rationalize and minimize its economic commitments overseas.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the British government still hoped that Britain's role in the area would not become marginalized.<sup>16</sup> The years 1946-1947 had seen a major decrease in British popularity and influence in Italy. The harshness of the Italian Peace Treaty, increased American interest in the region and Britain's withdrawal from Greece had taken their toll on British prestige with the Italians.<sup>17</sup> In other circumstances such developments could have meant the end of any vestige of British influence in Italy but Britain did succeed in maintaining a degree of sway. This was for two reasons. First, and foremost, because Italian politicians, like their European counterparts, had failed to grasp the momentous and fundamental shift in international power politics and the realities of bipolarity. Thus, they maintained their belief that London was still the centre of political developments.<sup>18</sup> Second, because of the short-lived influence of Nenni on Italy's foreign policy and who sought to moderate US dominance through his attempts at cultivating London and the

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<sup>15</sup>. Ellwood, op. cit., p. 171; Miller, op. cit., pp. 127.

<sup>16</sup>. Miller, op. cit., p. 143; Pedaliu, E.G.H., 'Change and Continuity in British Foreign Policy towards Italy, 1939-48' in Brivati, B. and Jones, H., (eds), *What Difference Did the War Make*, Leicester, 1993, pp. 151-64; Varsori, A., 'Great Britain and Italy, 1945-56: The Partnership between a Great Power and a Minor Power?', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 3, 1992, pp. 188-228.

<sup>17</sup>. FO 371/60711/ZM2371/1286/22, 8-7-1946, telegram, no. 1051, Charles to FO, 6-7-1946; *ibid.*, ZM2514/1286/22, 18-7-1946, confidential, despatch, no. 369, Charles to Bevin, 18-7-1946; minutes by Ross, 19-7-1946 and 24-7-1946, and Hoyer-Millar, 19-7-1946.

<sup>18</sup>. Di Nolfo, E., 'The Shaping of Italian Foreign Policy during the Formation of the East-West Blocs: Italy between the Superpowers', in Becker, and Knipping, pp. 489-491; Vigezzi, B., 'Italy: the End of a Great Power and the Birth of a Democratic Power', in Becker, and Knipping, (eds), op. cit., pp. 73-4.

Labour government.<sup>19</sup>

The pace of Bevin's long-term approach to European cooperation under British tutelage was quickened by the collapse of East-West cooperation and France's urgency to have its security underwritten by the United States. After the disastrous CFM meeting in December 1947, Bevin became extremely concerned about Western European defence and security. He believed a rapid move towards the consolidation of Western Europe was of the utmost necessity.<sup>20</sup> He was anxious, however, not to let it appear that Britain was taking an initiative which could divide Europe irretrievably by presenting the Western Union as merely an anti-Soviet organisation. Hence, the references to both the Soviet Union and to Germany in his speeches, his declaration that despite the problems Soviet aggressive behaviour had caused, his aim was not to divide Europe but merely to consolidate the West through economic and political means. Likewise his assertion that his scheme would create a situation that would allow for eventual accommodation with Eastern Europe.<sup>21</sup> His aim was to build a core consisting of the Five Powers bound together by economic, political, defensive, cultural and social arrangements.<sup>22</sup> Thereafter, he planned

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<sup>19</sup>. Nenni, P., *I nodi della politica estera italiana*, Milan, 1974, pp. 44-5 and 50-2; Nenni, *Tempo*, pp. 150-1, 171-7 and 255-6; Varsori, A., 'Bevin e Nenni, Ottobre 1946-Gennaio 1947: Una fase nei rapporti anglo-italiani del secondo dopoguerra', *Il politico*, Vol. XLIX, 1984, pp. 241-75, passim.

<sup>20</sup>. CAB 129/23, CP(48)6, top secret, 'First Aim of British Foreign Policy', memorandum by Bevin, 4-1-1948.

<sup>21</sup>. FO 371/73047/Z1308/273/72, 16-219-48, secret, telegram, no. 337, FO to Paris, 13-2-1948; FO 371/73049/Z1529/273/72, 23-2-1948, FO memorandum, 19-2-1948; FO 371/73050/Z1846/273/72, 4-3-1948, top secret, PM/48/32, FO minute by Bevin to Attlee, 1-3-1948; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, Vol. 446, 1947-48, Col., 394-409, London, 1948, speech by Bevin in the House of Commons, 22-1-1948.

<sup>22</sup>. FO 371/73048/Z1404/273/72, 17-2-1948, minute by Roberts; FO 371/73050/Z1865/273/72, 5-3-1948, minute by Jebb, 3-3-1948.



to expand this core to include other countries gradually, 'a step at a time'.<sup>23</sup>

Bevin was aware of the immediate and inter-related problems that his plan faced. Its success was dependent on creating the feeling amongst members that the Western Union could guarantee their security and that it could inspire similar confidence in aspiring members. Britain alone was unable to supply enough of the economic resources, arms and equipment to create such a climate and it became patently clear that without overt American backing a European security system could not work.<sup>24</sup> Bevin had to weigh the likelihood of an American commitment to the Western Union both prior to or after the public announcement of his plans. Jebb and Hollis were sent to America in the hope that the Truman Administration was prepared to agree to discussions on the subject.<sup>25</sup> Marshall, whilst initially approving Bevin's plan, was ultimately non-committal.<sup>26</sup> Bevin had hoped that his speech might trigger some kind of public announcement of support from the Americans. This was deemed to be

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<sup>23</sup>. FO 371/73045/Z353/273/72, 15-1-1948, minute by Bevin, 12-1-1948.

<sup>24</sup>. FO 371/73045/Z323/273/72, 4-1-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 9-1-1948, memorandum written by Jebb: "Organization of collective self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter", 21-1-1948.

<sup>25</sup>. Ibid., Z561/273/72, 22-1-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1032, Bevin to Lord Inverchapel, Ambassador in Washington, 26-1-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1070, FO to Washington, 27-1-48; *ibid.*, Z480/273/72, 21-1-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 284, Inverchapel to Bevin, 20-1-1948; *ibid.*, Z554/273/72, 22-1-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 304, Inverchapel to Bevin, 20-1-1948; FO 371/73046/Z896/273/72, 3-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1516, Inverchapel to Bevin, 2-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z1060/273/72, 9-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1642, Bevin to Inverchapel, 10-2-1948.

<sup>26</sup>. FO 371/73045/Z480/273/72, 20-1-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 284, Lord Inverchapel to Bevin, 20-1-1948; *ibid.*, Z554/273/72, 22-1-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 304, Lord Inverchapel to Bevin, 20-1-1948; FO 371/73046/Z897/273/72, 3-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1516, Inverchapel to Bevin, 2-2-1948; *ibid.*, Z973/273/72, 3-2-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1517, FO to Washington, 2-2-1948; FO 371/68067/AN1196/1195/45, 18-3-1948, minute by Roberts to Sargent, 14-3-1948, minute to the Prime Minister by McNeil, 16-3-1948.

vital in encouraging weaker countries such as Italy and Scandinavia to join the projected Western Union.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Bevin's idea had become contingent upon American support.

It is not an exaggeration to say that by January 1948, Anglo-Italian relations, at the best of times strained, had hit an all time low. This was as a result of the Mogadishu incident of 11th January 1948, an incident in which fifty two Italians died and many more were wounded during furious anti-Italian rioting by the local population and that, according to Sforza, had left Italy 'licking its wounds' and becoming inward looking.<sup>28</sup> Some Italian historians have maintained consistently that 'the local British commanders were guilty of grave negligence', if not complicity in the incident.<sup>29</sup> The Italian press had a field day. Newspapers were replete with horror stories and allegations that the British had contributed, at least indirectly, to this death toll by secretly nurturing anti-Italian feelings among the Somalis. Italian nationalist circles grasped the opportunity to whip up anti-British feelings among the Italian population.<sup>30</sup> Gallarati Scotti, the Italian Ambassador, did his utmost to temper the reaction of his government to the tragedy that had befallen the Italians in Somalia. He warned repeatedly that the Italian government's treatment of the unfortunate event was misdirected and damaging for Italy and its interests and that it was causing untold harm in

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<sup>27</sup>. FO 371/73049/Z1637/273/72, 26-2-1948, minute by Jebb, 3-3-1948.

<sup>28</sup>. ASMAE, AL, *busta*: 1360, memorandum by Count Carlo Sforza, 14-7-1948.

<sup>29</sup>. Vigezzi, 'Italy: the End of a Great Power and the Birth of a Democratic Power', pp. 72.

<sup>30</sup>. For a detailed treatment of this incident and its implications for Anglo-Italian relations, see: Varsori, A., *Il diverso declino di due potenze coloniali. Gli eventi di Mogadiscio del gennaio 1948 e i rapporti anglo-italiani*, Roma, 1981, *passim*.

Anglo-Italian relations.<sup>31</sup>

As a result of this sharp deterioration in Anglo-Italian relations, an Italian involvement in the Western Union was deemed as being essential as a means for the British to improve their image in Italian public opinion, to strengthen the De Gasperi government in the run up to the April 1948 election, to sooth Italian bitterness over the colonial clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty and to ensure that Britain did not lose the last remnants of its influence in Italy. It was also considered that the best way to make amends for the Mogadishu incident was to involve Italy internationally, through the Western Union and in the development of Africa which Bevin considered to be 'particularly important'.<sup>32</sup> To this end he set up an inquiry into the incident, apologized in person and expressed his sympathy for the Mogadishu incident to Gallarati Scotti, stressing to him that he wanted nothing to mar Anglo-Italian relations.<sup>33</sup> For his part, Gallarati Scotti assured Bevin that his government would try to prevent any attempts by the Soviet Union and communist circles to exploit the incident to whip up anti-British feeling. He also went on to point out that it was these circles who were trying to capitalize on Britain's opposition to Italy's colonial ambitions by presenting Britain as being the only country still bent on frustrating these aspirations.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, *Carte Gallarati Scotti*, file, no. 17, undated and unsigned memorandum from London; Sforza to Gallarati Scotti, 23-1-48; Gallarati Scotti to Count V. Zoppi, Director of Political Affairs, MAE, 23-6-1948 cited in Varsori, A., 'De Gasperi, Nenni, Sforza and their Role in Post-War Italian Foreign policy', pp. 89-114.

<sup>32</sup>. CO 537/3316/25030/2, top secret, CP(48)43, memorandum by E. Bevin, 4-2-1948; letter, Crosthwaite to A.B. Cohen, CO, 21-6-1948; FO 371/73046/Z1061/273/72, 9-2-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 147, FO to Brussels, 1-2-1948; minute by Crosthwaite, 10-2-1948.

<sup>33</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z637/637/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Roberts, record of Bevin's meeting with Gallarati-Scotti, 24-1-1948.

<sup>34</sup>. Ibid.

The Western Department of the Foreign Office had looked at colonial concessions and had searched for a solution to Italy's excess population problems in order to help De Gasperi win the Italian election. Mallet endorsed this action as he was aware of the importance of such issues to Italy. He suggested, in addition, that Italy should be given trusteeship for all of her ex-colonies with the exception of Cyrenaica.<sup>35</sup> In fact, the Italians had already begun to agitate for a solution to the country's over-population. They brought the matter up in connection with the European Recovery Programme (ERP) and claimed that Italy's main contribution to the ERP would be to place her surplus labour at the disposal of the sixteen participating nations.<sup>36</sup> Bevin and the Western Department came up with the idea of providing for an Italian contribution to colonial development in Africa. First, more Italians could be recruited to work and be allowed to settle permanently in Britain's African colonies as opposed to working on short-term contracts. Second, in April 1948, the Foreign Office proposed that colonial development in Africa ought to be co-ordinated through the African Development Council under the aegis of the Committee of European Economic Cooperation. It was intended that Italy be included in such a scheme in the event that it was granted trusteeship over any of its previous colonies. Under this scheme, Italy could join a committee which represented all the African Powers, namely Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and South Africa. As a member of this organization and the CEEC it would be brought into consultation on all questions affecting the recruitment of European labour in Africa.<sup>37</sup> Mallet applauded the idea as it would indicate that the British

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<sup>35</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 15-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 21-2-1948.

<sup>36</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73158/Z3043/93/22, 12-4-1948, minute by Brown, 8-4-1948.

<sup>37</sup>. CO 537/3316/25030/2, top secret, note of a meeting in the Foreign Office, 13-4-1948, cited in Kent, *Britain's Imperial Strategy*, pp. 177-9; FO 371/73158/3043/93/22, 12-4-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 8-4-1948; FO 371/73157/Z2146/93/22, 15-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 21-2-1948.

government had shown publicly, practical evidence that it was sympathetic to Italy's overpopulation.<sup>38</sup>

The Colonial Office disliked the idea intensely and jettisoned it fearing that any such policy would have a detrimental impact on African opinion.<sup>39</sup> It maintained that the need for semi-skilled foreign labour of this kind in Africa was temporary. Its goal was to train local Africans to do these jobs and wished to protect them against such external competition. There was also concern about the reaction of the Northern African peoples to the re-introduction of Italy in the region. Makins tried to exploit the opposition of the Colonial Office and suggested that it draft a memorandum containing its objections and forward it to Bevin in the hope that it would lessen Bevin's enthusiasm.<sup>40</sup> Bevin received it, but he did not change his mind. He found the memorandum 'disappointing' and he took the matter up with Arthur Creech-Jones, the Colonial Secretary. He outlined his plans and stressed to him the importance of the scheme. Bevin suggested that in view of the uncooperative attitude of the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office should work together with the Ministry of Labour to facilitate Italian firms and labour participating in the development of African colonial resources. The two ministries responded by suggesting that the best way forward was to survey the various existing development schemes and their manpower requirements in order to assess whether or not Italian labour was required. Once more, the Colonial Office would not countenance such a suggestion.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid., G.L. Clutton, head of the African Department of the FO, to A.B. Cohen, 7-9-1948; minutes by A. Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary, 9-9-1948, K.E. Robinson, head of the Anglo-French Economic Cooperation in West Africa Working Party, 17-9-1948.

Bevin was not deterred by the repeated rebuffs from the Colonial Office. When he met Sforza, he raised the issue of Italian labour surpluses and his government's interest in helping Italy solve this problem. He informed the Italian Foreign Minister that Britain was trying to help by employing more Italians in Africa, but he went on to stress that he was also cautious about such action having a great impact because of the enormity of the problem. Nearly two million excess Italians had to be absorbed. Britain's contribution thus, he stressed, could be only a small one.<sup>42</sup> He also met with the Italian Ambassador in London to explain his vision to him and Italy's role within it. Bevin told Gallarati Scotti that:

there was not as yet a cut and dried plan for Western Europe. We had to proceed step by step and if we had to put the Low Countries before the Mediterranean this was a question of method and it did not indicate any ill-will towards Italy...It was better to build brick by brick....[Italy] would be invited to participate on exactly the same level as the other countries. Whoever was brought in the club would be invited as an equal member of it, and this of course implied equal responsibilities.<sup>43</sup>

These last two sentences were of the utmost importance to the Italians whose whole policy during this period had been directed towards achieving such parity.<sup>44</sup> Sforza had based his foreign policy the principle of Italian international rehabilitation and parity with other powers within a European framework.<sup>45</sup> For many Italians it was also significant that such a statement had come from the

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<sup>42</sup>. FO 371/73157/Z2375/93/22, 19-3-1948, brief for Bevin's conversation with Sforza drafted by Crosthwaite, 12-3-1948.

<sup>43</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z643/93/22, 26-1-1948, telegram, no. 145, Mallet to Bevin, 24-1-1948; FO 371/73191/Z637/637/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Roberts, record of discussion between Bevin and Gallarati-Scotti, 24-1-1948.

<sup>44</sup>. Varsori, A., 'De Gasperi, Nenni, Sforza and their Role in Post-War Italian Foreign policy', pp. 101-2; Miller, M., 'Approaches to European Institution Building of Carlo Sforza, Italian Foreign Minister, 1947-51' in Deighton, A., (ed), *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision Makers and European Institutions, 1948-63*, London, 1995, pp. 55-69.

<sup>45</sup>. Sforza, C., *Cinque anni a Palazzo Chigi: La politica estera italiana del 1947 al 1951*, Roma, 1952, pp. 13.

man in charge of British foreign policy as hitherto, Italian politicians had suspected that Britain was striving to frustrate some of their aspirations.<sup>46</sup> This was a display of rare sensitivity on Bevin's part where the Italians were concerned. The Italian Ambassador took the opportunity to stress to Bevin that the Italian government saw it as a means of restoring the country's 'dignity and moral force' and, by extension, of strengthening it to withstand communism.<sup>47</sup> He suggested to Bevin that the colonial question ought to be considered against this background and that the nationalistic feelings of the Italian people also had to be taken into account. Gallarati Scotti saw Bevin's Western Union as the ideal opportunity for these issues to be addressed simultaneously, envisaging as it did, close European collaboration in the fields of African development and in international cooperation.<sup>48</sup>

The advent of the Czech coup brought renewed concerns about the internal security situation in Italy. Bevin's priority was not to give the opportunity and ammunition to the Communists to attack the anti-Communist electoral alliance.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the Foreign Office decided not to take any steps before the Italian government had been consulted and it had assessed if, in view of the April election result, it would be politically expedient for Italy to be formally invited to join the Brussels Treaty as a founding member.<sup>50</sup> Reactions to the

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<sup>46</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z643/93/22, 26-1-1948, telegram, no. 145, Mallet to Bevin, 24-1-1948.

<sup>47</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z637/637/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Roberts, record of Bevin's meeting with Gallarati-Scotti, 24-1-1948.

<sup>48</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>. FO 371/73069/Z2642/2307/22, 30-3-1948, top secret, minute by Roberts, record of discussion between Bevin and the American Ambassador, 26-2-1948.

<sup>50</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z2376/637/22, 19-3-1948, memorandum by Sargent, notes for Secretary of State prior to his meeting with Sforza, 13-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z643/93/22, 26-1-1948, telegram, no. 145, Mallet to Bevin, 24-1-1948.

Western Union speech in Italy were also monitored closely. Bevin's speech had been received with mixed reactions in Italy. The Vatican had welcomed it warmly seeing it as a means of checking the expansion of 'atheistic and materialistic communism'.<sup>51</sup> It was also received positively in the coverage of the pro-government Press. However, the socialist and communist newspapers attacked it with deliberate vehemence. *L'Unità* described Bevin's proposals as an attempt by Britain to relegate all Western European countries to dominion status, as constituting a poisonous attack on the Soviet Union and in a March issue it described the Treaty of Brussels as 'the Holy Alliance against the people's democracies'.<sup>52</sup> *Avanti!*'s coverage was more restrained but equally negative. Its editorial on 27 January pointed out that Bevin's plans 'were designed to meet British interests which ...[were] not necessarily identical with those of Europe and in particular with those of Italy'.<sup>53</sup> The Soviet Press was also unanimous in its condemnation of the Western Union idea which it called a camouflage to disguise a 'military-political bloc' in the 'service of American imperialism and their British junior partners' in the guise of a Western European organization. *Pravda*, in particular, called it the 'Holy Alliance of the twentieth century of reactionaries and socialists against the peoples of Europe'.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>. FO 371/73048/Z1331/273/72, 17-2-1948, Vatican Press commentary reported by Perowne, despatch, no. 21, 17-2-1948.

<sup>52</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z644/93/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 26-1-1948; *The Manchester Guardian*, article, 25-1-1948; FO 371/73054/Z2447/273/72, 23-3-1948, telegram, no. 533, Mallet to FO, 19-3-1948.

<sup>53</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z991/93/22, 5-2-1948, telegram, no. 18 saving, Mallet to Bevin, 31-1-1948.

<sup>54</sup>. FO 371/73051/Z2008/273/72, 10-3-1948, telegram, no. 350, M. Paterson (Moscow) to FO, 9-3-1948, *Pravda*, article, 8-3-1948; FO 371/73052/Z2105/273/72, 12-3-1948, telegram, no. 355, Paterson to FO, 10-3-1948; FO 371/73055/Z2262/273/72, 16-3-1948, telegram, no. 369, Paterson to FO, 15-3-1948; *Pravda*, 14-3-1948.



Italian public opinion favoured the adoption of a neutralist foreign policy. The majority of the Italian people believed that Italy should avoid taking part in the widening rift between the superpowers. The pro-neutrality sentiments arose from a disillusionment from previous wars and the desire to protect the country from another disastrous involvement. The view that neutrality could prevent Italy from becoming a battleground in a future conflict between East and West had been expressed by 70% of the Italian population and had cut across party lines and social classes.<sup>55</sup> The Left Wing alliance understood clearly how deep-seated this fear was and designed their electoral campaign to address and exploit these fears. On 15 March 1948, in a pre-election speech in Milan, Nenni painted a sinister picture of the Western Union. He described it as the organization that 'would inevitably drag Italy into the Third World War she was so anxious to avoid'. He went on to compare it with the Anti-Comintern Pact of the 1930s which was perceived by many as having brought Italy into the Second World War.<sup>56</sup> The adverse reaction of the Italian Opposition Press to the Western Union raised fears that a premature invitation to Italy to join could play into the hands of anti-Western forces. Mallet's reports from Rome confirmed these fears and, indeed, exacerbated them. His opinion was that the speech had already become an important element in the repertoire of attacks by the Left on the Italian government.<sup>57</sup> Mallet's analysis was an accurate one. Newspaper reports also supported his view. *The Times* correspondent in Rome put it simply and bluntly, 'any unforeseen development connected with a hasty attempt to pledge Italy to a closer union with the West would provide

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<sup>55</sup>. Mammarella, op. cit., pp. 236-7; FO 371/73191/Z2454/637/22, 22-3-48, minute by Brown, 22-3-1948; secret, telegram, no. 518, Ward to FO, 18-3-1948.

<sup>56</sup>. Ibid.; *Avanti!*, 29-1-1948; Nenni, *Tempo*, p. 431 and 418.

<sup>57</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z991/93/22, 5-2-1948, telegram, no. 18, saving, Mallet to Bevin, 24-1-1948.

political capital for the popular front'.<sup>58</sup>

Sforza was aware of this possibility and he knew that if Italy was ever to join a Western organization, Italian public opinion had to be re-educated.<sup>59</sup> He heaped unreserved praise on Bevin, naturally, because of his pro-European ideology and because he believed that the best means for Italy to achieve international parity was within a European framework. At the same time he remained cautious and cagey on the possibility of Italy joining such a framework in the present political climate in Italy. He went on to state and reiterate publicly that Italy would consider associating herself with the proposed structure 'only on conditions of absolute parity' and in the Cabinet he said that Italy would have to be for the time being an 'extraneous observer'.<sup>60</sup>

When Dunn proposed that Italy should adhere to the Western Union prior to the elections believing that it would strengthen De Gasperi, but the Italian Prime Minister resolutely rejected the proposal.<sup>61</sup> Several days later Saragat approached Mallet and told him in confidence that although De Gasperi and his government were unanimously in favour of Italy's association with the Western Union they dared not commit themselves to it before the election as they might

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<sup>58</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z2726/637/22, 31-3-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 30-1-1948.

<sup>59</sup>. FO 371/73061/Z6305/273/72, 4-8-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1276, Mallet to FO, 2-8-1948.

<sup>60</sup>. FO 371/73155/Z643/93/22, 26-1-1948, tel. no. 145, Mallet to Bevin, 24-1-1948; *Archivio Centrale dello Stato*, ACS, *verbale della riunione del Consiglio dei ministri*, 28-1-1948; Varsori, A., 'Italy's Policy towards European Integration, 1948-58' in Duggan, and Wagstaff, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>61</sup>. FO 371/73193/Z2449/640/22, 22-3-1948, telegram, no. 54, Mallet to FO, 19-3-1948; FO 371/73157/Z2069/93/22, 11-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1126, Washington to FO, 10-3-1948; FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, p. 45-6 and 53-4; Varsori, A., 'De Gasperi, Nenni, Sforza and their Role in Post-War Italian Foreign policy', pp. 107-108; Quartararo, R., *Italia e Stati Uniti: Gli Anni Difficili, 1945-52*, Rome, 1986, p. 258.

alienate voters who feared the possibility of another war.<sup>62</sup> Thus, in no time, the idea of creating a Western Union with Italian participation became embroiled in the politics of the Italian election.<sup>63</sup> Both the British and Italian governments were in absolute agreement that ensuring a pro-Western election result was the overriding concern and that all other issues, including the Western Union and Italian association, could wait.<sup>64</sup> As a result, the Foreign Office put Italian incorporation into the Brussels Treaty on the 'back-burner' until after the General Election in April 1948.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to the Italian election other concerns surfaced which precluded an immediate association of Italy with the Treaty of Brussels after its signing on the 17 March. There was concern that Italy would try to re-negotiate revisions to the Peace Treaty against her entry into the Pact.<sup>66</sup> Orme Sargent, the Permanent Undersecretary of the Foreign Office, was of the opinion that Bevin should not leave Sforza with the impression that he was anxious to see a very quick Italian accession. In his opinion this would only encourage the Italians to make their accession conditional on the immediate revision of the military

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<sup>62</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z2545/637/22, 22-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 518, Ward to FO, 18-3-1948.

<sup>63</sup>. FO 371/73156/Z1316/93/22, 16-2-1948, telegram, no. 29, Mallet to FO, 13-2-1948; minute by Kirkpatrick, 23-2-1948.

<sup>64</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 46-8; ASMAE, *Ambasciata Parigi* (AP), busta: 405, *telespresso*, T482, Quaroni al Ministero, 1-4-1948; Pastorelli, op. cit., pp. 1020-30.

<sup>65</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z2545/637/22, 22-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 22-3-1948; FO 371/68067/AN1296/1195/45, 23-3-1948, top secret, tel., no. 3208, FO to Washington, 24-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1315/1195/45, 25-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 1430, Washington to FO, 24-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3384, FO to Washington, 25-3-1948; *ibid.*, AN1325/1195/45, 26-3-1948, telegram, no. 1461, Bevin to Inverchapel, 29-3-1948.

<sup>66</sup>. FO 371/73049/Z1637/273/72, 26-2-1948, minute by Jebb, 20-3-1948.

clauses of the Peace Treaty.<sup>67</sup>

The British Military did not share Bevin's eagerness regarding the Western Union in general and Italian inclusion in particular. A. V. Alexander, the Minister of Defence communicated these doubts to Bevin. The Chiefs of Staff Committee at its 17 January meeting, had decided in principle that Britain should not dispatch a land expeditionary force to the Continent in the event of a future crisis. The Chiefs believed that, at this time, for any defence organization to be effective and to be able to deter aggression, it needed to have the support of the Americans. They also stated that they could not possibly commit themselves to military action on the Continent until they were clear about the scope and scale of American commitment. Alexander urged Bevin to agree a common policy towards the USSR with Marshall and to open defence talks with the Americans as soon as possible. The Service Departments also expressed concerns about the possibility of the Communists infiltrating the Italian Ministry of Defence and compromising British strategic plans.<sup>68</sup> Such attitudes which were widespread, indicated that the military was less than enthusiastic at the prospect of a weak country such as Italy, which could not defend itself, being included in such a Union.

The French too, were overtly opposed to the idea of Italian accession to the Brussels Treaty Organization (BTO). They maintained that such an accession would signify a major breach of the military clauses of the Italian Peace Treaty. When Jebb asked Chauvel, his opposite number at *Quai d'Orsay*, what he thought about the incorporation of Italy into the BTO, the latter described the

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<sup>67</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z2376/637/22, 19-3-1948, minute by Sargent, 13-3-1948.

<sup>68</sup>. FO 371/73052/Z2255/273/72, 16-3-1948, letter by A.V. Alexander Secretary of State for Defence, to Bevin, 10-3-1948.

possibility as an attractive idea but in the same breath he outlined some of the less appealing aspects. He believed that an invitation for Italy to join at this stage would have an injurious rather than a beneficial impact on De Gasperi's re-election chances because of the relentless attacks it would attract from the Communists. Then, he expressed concern that the treaty would impose obligations on Italy that it could not fulfil because of the limitations of the Italian Peace Treaty. At same time, accession would give Italy an opportunity to present a legitimate claim for release from its military restrictions in order to be able to carry out its obligations under the Brussels Treaty.<sup>69</sup> Despite the coolness of the French, when Bevin met Bidault on his way from Paris to Brussels, he informed him that he was thinking of bringing Italy into the Western Union if De Gasperi won the election. Bidault replied, unenthusiastically, that even though he had no objections in principle, he was concerned that such action could create the circumstances for an early revision of the Peace Treaty and that this would provide the Communists with a propaganda coup. What revealed his true attitude however, was his assessment that it would not be expedient to 'run after Italy too much because Italy would certainly would make us pay heavily for her adherence'. Bevin agreed to approach the subject slowly and with caution.<sup>70</sup>

The Benelux countries also expressed their apprehension and opposition. They wished to ensure that if Italy acceded, it did so unconditionally and that it would have no power to veto the incorporation of other countries. They wanted to preserve this privilege for the five original powers. Sir George Rendel, the British Ambassador to Belgium, stressed that the attitude of the

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<sup>69</sup>. FO 371/73053/Z2411/273/72, 19-3-1948, minute by Sargent, addressed to Bevin, 5-3-1948.

<sup>70</sup>. FO 371/73055/Z2559/273/72, 24-3-1948, minute by Roberts, 18-3-1948, record of discussion between Bevin and Bidault, 17-3-1948.

Benelux countries was not hostile *per se* to the idea of extending the Treaty in the future to include other countries, nor to the prospect that eventually it would form the nucleus for a wider Western European Organization. However, they saw the Western Union primarily as a means of tightening up relations among the Five powers. As far as they were concerned, they did not regard Italy as a power 'sufficiently closely allied to them by interest or tradition to participate automatically'.<sup>71</sup>

As a result of such apprehensions Italy did not accede to the Treaty of Brussels before April 1948. Neither Bevin nor the Western Department of the Foreign Office saw this as permanent but regarded accession as a matter of timing. They sincerely continued to hope that Italy would adhere to the pact as soon as it was feasible. The fact that Italy was weak militarily did not change the views of the Foreign Office because as Kirkpatrick had pointed out, it was preferable 'to have it in our military orbit rather than outside'.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the Western Department advised that cooperation in the development of Africa should not be confined just to the Five Power Treaty signatories. They thought it necessary that the involvement of Italy, Portugal, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia ought to be sought as well.<sup>73</sup> Article IX of the Brussels Treaty was drafted in such a way as to enable other European countries to join at a later stage, if they wanted to, or even to participate in just those clauses which were the most suitable to their circumstances. It stated that 'the High Contracting Parties may, by agreement, invite any other State to accede to the present

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<sup>71</sup>. FO 371/73051/Z2003/273/72, 9-3-1948, secret, telegram, no. 129, Rendell to FO, 9-3-1948.

<sup>72</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z4084/637/22, 13-5-1948, letter from Kirkpatrick to Rendel, 25-5-1948.

<sup>73</sup>. FO 371/73051/Z2001/273/72, 9-3-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 9-3-1948.

Treaty on conditions to be agreed between them and the State so invited'.<sup>74</sup> Italy for example could adhere to the economic clauses and America to mutual defence arrangements.<sup>75</sup>

The Christian Democrats won a landslide victory on 18 April but Italy still did not join the Brussels Pact. Attitudes about how quickly Italy should be approached to join the BTO varied significantly among the interested powers. The Americans had not made up their minds on the issue. The State Department was still undecided but Truman had reacted positively to the possibility of Italian accession.<sup>76</sup> French opposition to the inclusion of Italy continued even after the DC's resounding victory. The French felt that a better solution all around would be for Italy to be included in a future Mediterranean Pact, to include Britain, France, Italy, Greece and Turkey.<sup>77</sup> The British, like the Americans had reached the conclusion that the bloc formation was irreversible for the foreseeable future, that the Soviet Union had increased its power and that after having succeeded in dominating Eastern Europe completely, it was now seeking to undermine Southern and Western Europe. In this bleak climate Britain decided that BTO expansion should not take place before the

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<sup>74</sup>. Royal Institute of International Affairs, Carlyle, M., (ed.), *Documents in International Affairs, 1947-48*, London, 1952, Cmd. 7599, The Treaty of Brussels: Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence between, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, Brussels, 17-3-1948, pp. 225-230.

<sup>75</sup>. FO 371/73054/Z2557/273/72, 24-3-1948, Bidault to Bevin, 17-3-1948.

<sup>76</sup>. FRUS, 1948, Vol. III, pp. 107; Vigezzi, op. cit., p. 83; Pastorelli, op. cit., p. 1021.

<sup>77</sup>. FO 371/73052/Z2256/273/72, 16-3-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 13-3-1948; FO 371/73191/Z2376/637/22, 19-3-1948, minute by Sargent, 13-3-1948; FO 371/73060/Z5543/273/72, 8-7-1948, top secret, minute, undated, unsigned; CO 537/3316/25003/2, secret, telegram, no. 644, Harvey to FO, 12-5-1948.

Americans had guaranteed the defence of the new alliance.<sup>78</sup> Once the system for the defence of Europe had been guaranteed then Britain would embark on the creation of the Mediterranean and Pacific systems. The systems would ultimately be linked together to create a world-wide network of collective security.<sup>79</sup>

Even with the elections over the Italians themselves showed no signs of urgency in joining. De Gasperi approached the matter with caution not only because the PCI and PSI were continuing to use the issue to accentuate public fears that Italy was being dragged into another war but also because like Sforza and Quaroni, he too believed that Italy 'should leave all roads open' and explore its options as to the most advantageous means of binding itself to the West.<sup>80</sup> De Gasperi did not see the Treaty of Brussels as offering an adequate security guarantee for Italy and he was influenced by the fact that opinions as to the wisdom of Italian accession to the Pact varied widely.<sup>81</sup> The Foreign Office decided to leave it up to the Italians to raise the issue formally as it sensed that neither the Italian people nor the Italian government were anxious for their country to accede immediately.<sup>82</sup> The Western Department felt that the Italian government should be given adequate time to formulate its programme

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<sup>78</sup>. FO 371/73060/Z5543/273/72, 8-7-1948, top secret, FO memorandum, unsigned, undated; FO 371/73105/Z8829/8829/72, 30-10-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick addressed to Bevin, 8-10-1948.

<sup>79</sup>. FO 371/73060/Z5543/273/72, 8-7-1948, top secret, FO minute, unsigned, undated.

<sup>80</sup>. ASMAE, AP, *busta*: 405, letter, Quaroni a Zoppi, 20-5-1948; ACS, *Consiglio dei ministri*, 28-1-1948; ACS, *minuta del verbale dell riunione del Consiglio dei ministri*, 15-7-1948.

<sup>81</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z3648/673/22, 30-4-1948, minute by Laurence, 30-4-1948; secret, telegram, no. 582, Harvey to FO, 26-4-1948; Vigezzi, op. cit., pp. 77-80 and 83.

<sup>82</sup>. Ibid., Z3648/637/22, 26-4-1948, undated minute by Bevin.



and it was expected that this would take up to 1 June.<sup>83</sup> Mallet, too, advised the adoption of a cautious approach.<sup>84</sup> Bevin thus, decided 'not to force the pace'.<sup>85</sup>

At this moment, however, De Gasperi chose to give a press conference in which he appeared to link the issue of Italian accession to the Brussels Treaty with the revision of the Italian Peace Treaty, thereby committing a grave tactical error.<sup>86</sup> Bevin was greatly angered. The press conference confirmed all his prejudices on how Italy was conducting its diplomacy. He felt that the British efforts to help had been misconstrued as a willingness to accept a wholesale 'Italian nationalistic programme'.<sup>87</sup> For Britain, Peace Treaty revision was not on the agenda at all. In fact, British opposition to the revision of its military clauses continued unabated even after Italy's accession to NATO as a founding member and the British government could not see how a revision of the Treaty would help the Italian government. As far as Bevin was concerned, Italy stood to gain much more if it put its 'house in order with proper schemes of social reform and by generous cooperation in the rehabilitation of Europe rather than by a policy of blackmail'.<sup>88</sup>

He instructed Mallet to attempt to make the Italians understand in no uncertain

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<sup>83</sup>. Ibid., minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 26-4-1948.

<sup>84</sup>. Ibid., Z3648/637/22, 30-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 721, Mallet to FO, 24-4-1948.

<sup>85</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z3464/637/22, 26-4-1948, undated minute by Bevin; minute by Pemberton Pigott, 26-4-1948.

<sup>86</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z3675/637/22, 1-5-1948, telegram, no. 95, saving, Mallet to Bevin, 30-4-48; transcript of De Gasperi's interview with United Press, 26-4-48; Breccia, A., 'L'adesione dell' Italia al Patto Atlantico', *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*, 1974, pp. 75-6; Pastorelli, op. cit., p. 1019.

<sup>87</sup>. Ibid., Z3675/637/22, 1-5-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1103, Bevin to Mallet, 5-5-48; minute by Crosthwaite, 2-5-1948.

<sup>88</sup>. Ibid.

terms that Italian agreement to accession to the Treaty of Brussels should not be thought of by them as a favour to the Five Powers, but to point out to them that, in fact, accession would involve taking on 'onerous additional commitments'.<sup>89</sup> De Gasperi privately tried to make amends for the press conference. He claimed that he fully appreciated Britain's generosity in inviting an ex-enemy to be party to a Treaty that would offer his country guarantees for its defence. However, he stressed that he had to tread warily and that he had to take into account Italian public opinion which had been inflamed by communist propaganda that had presented the aims of the Treaty as a making war against Russia.<sup>90</sup> Bevin was not in the mood to be appeased. He rejected De Gasperi's overtures out of hand. When Mallet tried to intercede on De Gasperi's behalf, Bevin replied tersely, that he 'must pay attention to what he [De Gasperi] says in public'.<sup>91</sup> Bevin's temper did not improve once he became aware of the federalist enthusiasm that the Congress of Europe at the Hague, had unleashed in May 1948.

### **Britain's Retreat from Europe**

Bevin formed a dim view of the Congress from the first moment he heard of its convocation. He was afraid that it would generate grandiose and impractical ideas, raise unrealistic expectations in both America and Europe and because, moreover, it gave Winston S. Churchill, the leader of the Opposition who was closely involved with it, a platform on which to attack Labour government policy.<sup>92</sup> The Foreign Office decided that the Hague Conference should not receive any support from the British government but instructed British

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<sup>89</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>. Ibid., Z3755/637/22, 4-5-1948, secret, telegram, no. 769, Mallet to Bevin, 3-5-1948.

<sup>91</sup>. Ibid., Z3675/637/22, 1-5-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1103, Bevin to Mallet, 5-5-1948.

<sup>92</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., p. 730.

ambassadors in Europe not to do anything to hinder the Conference.<sup>93</sup> The decisions of the Hague Congress matched Bevin darkest nightmares. Although there was praise for the Treaty of Brussels, the conferees stressed that it should not be an end in itself and they called for the creation of a European Assembly, a call which was to put federalism firmly in the political lexicon of European cooperation.<sup>94</sup> Bevin detested these pronouncements instantaneously. He was worried that such an Assembly would infringe on national sovereignty,<sup>95</sup> that it would be problematic from the security point of view because it could be infiltrated by Communists and fellow travellers<sup>96</sup> and that it would have serious implications on Britain's relations with the Commonwealth.<sup>97</sup> Above all however the European Assembly contradicted Bevin's preferred approach to European integration, that of a British-led Western European group based primarily on colonial cooperation and development. He believed firmly that the support and the goodwill of the Commonwealth would be a great strength to Western Europe and he wanted to carry it with him in any move towards increased European cooperation. To do this he would have to seek the views of its Prime Ministers before Britain

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<sup>93</sup>. FO 371/73095/Z4416/4416/72, 27-5-1948, memorandum drafted by Jebb and Crosthwaite, 23-5-1948; minute by Jebb addressed to Sargent, 24-5-1948; secret, circular no. 39, Bevin to Ambassadors, 22-3 1948; FO 371/73097/Z6885/4416/72, 25-8-1948, letter, Harvey to Sargent, 20-8-1948; letter, Kirkpatrick to Harvey, 28-8-1948.

<sup>94</sup>. Loth, op. cit., pp. 220-1; Nugent, N., *The Government and Politics of the European Union*, London, 1994, p. 15.

<sup>95</sup>. FO 371/73096/Z5743/4416/72, 2-7-1948, minute by Jebb, 16-6-1948; *ibid.*, Z6439/4416/72, 7-8-1948, letter, Attlee to Churchill, 21-8-1948.

<sup>96</sup>. FO 371/73097/Z6885/4416/72, 25-8-1948, letter, Harvey to FO, 20-8-1948; CAB 128/13, CM54(48), 26-7-1948.

<sup>97</sup>. FO 371/73097/Z6925/4416/72, 26-8-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick to Attlee, PM/48/67, 21-8-1948; letter, from Attlee to Churchill, 21-8-1948.

would take a further step.<sup>98</sup>

At this time, the view of the British government was that the signing of the Treaty of Brussels was as far as it was prepared to go in European collaboration. Its view of the BTO was that it should form the hard core of an evolutionary process that would lead to political and economic cooperation among member states.<sup>99</sup> For the British government the BTO ought to be expanded in two successive stages, first, the Atlantic Treaty had to be signed to secure Europe from the prospect of Soviet aggression and then it could move to the second stage which was that of European political cooperation.<sup>100</sup> In the of summer 1948 British policy-makers were focused on matters of security. For them, the accomplishment of the second stage of their three step approach towards the creation of a British-led Western Union, namely the American guarantee of the defence of the BTO through a binding Treaty, was of paramount priority. The Berlin Blockade had come too early for the Five Powers to provide a plausible deterrent to Soviet aggression and the heightened insecurity it had brought to Europe convinced the British beyond any shadow of doubt that this was the only way forward. Bevin and the Foreign Office were however forced to refocus on European cooperation when some of the 'Trojan horses' of which Bevin had been so apprehensive, did indeed escape 'from Pandora's box' and began to manifest themselves. Federalist

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<sup>98</sup>. FO 371/73045/Z353/273/72, 15-1-1945, minute by Bevin, 12-1-1948; FO 371/73097/Z7327/4416/72, 10-9-1948, FO minute: 'instructions to the UK representative on the Permanent Commission of the BTO', 2-9-1948.

<sup>99</sup>. CAB 128/13, CM54(48), 26-7-1948; FO 371/73096/Z6439/4416/72, 7-8-1948, letter, Attlee to W.S. Churchill, 21-8-1948; FO 371/73097/Z6925/4416/72, 26-8-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 19-8-1948; letter, Churchill to Attlee, 21-8-1948; Attlee to Churchill, 21-8-1948

<sup>100</sup>. FO 371/73073/Z5717/2307, 14-7-1948, secret, GEN. 243, text of statement by Bevin on the 2nd meeting of the Security Talks in Washington, 9-7-1948; FO 371/73063/Z7807/273/72, 27-9-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 2-10-1948; FO 371/73105/Z8829/8829/ 72, 30-10-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, addressed to Bevin, 8-10-1948.

schemes were promoted during summer 1948 by both France and Italy which brought to the fore the issues of BTO enlargement, the creation of an European Assembly and challenged both the British schedule and the British model of European cooperation.<sup>101</sup>

In July, at the second meeting of the Consultative Council of the BTO, Bidault called for the convention of an 'European Parliamentary Assembly'. Bidault's proposals were the product of French Parliamentary pressure, France's insecurities, its desire to promote its own economic recovery, its fear of a rehabilitated Germany and the endemic instability of the French Fourth Republic.<sup>102</sup> Jebb and Makins, looking at the French proposals, came to the conclusion that a federalist response for Europe was not a panacea but would be an impractical gesture because of the diversity in the economies of the European countries, intra-European payments difficulties and because of the over-reaching ambitions of the scheme.<sup>103</sup> Bevin agreed with the conclusions reached by his officials, but at the same time, wishing to avoid any misconception on Makins' part that he was losing interest in European cooperation, he reiterated his interest in the Western Union concept and his determination to consolidate European cooperation within the Five Power set

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<sup>101</sup>. FO 371/73060/Z5784/273/72, 16-7- 1948, top secret, telegram, no. 974, Harvey to Bevin, 15-7-1948; Young, *Britain, France*, pp. 128-31; Warner, 'Britain and Europe in 1948', p. 37.

<sup>102</sup>. FO 371/73097/Z6885/4416/72, 25-8-1948, letter, Harvey to Sargent, 20-8-1948. Jean Monnet, the Minister for Reconstruction, was particularly pessimistic about the long term results of the ERP, he saw more as a relief programme rather than aimed at reconstruction and gloomily pronounces that now both France and Britain were living on American charity. Thus Monnet came to the conclusion that the only way forward was the adoption by Western European powers of federalist policies on both the economic and political fields.

<sup>103</sup>. FO 371/73060/Z5801/273/72, 16-7-1948, minutes by Jebb, 2-7-1948 and Makins, 5-7-1948.

up.<sup>104</sup> At the BTO, Bevin, reserved his position and claimed that the French proposal was 'unsuitable' for discussion at this time. Bidault, however, was a reluctant advocate of the French proposals and Bevin found it easy to postpone the discussion of the issue for a future meeting of the Brussels Treaty Consultative Commission. This only postponed troubles to later as the developments of summer and autumn 1948 have shown.<sup>105</sup> Delaying tactics failed to quash the issue and by August the French, in close collaboration with the Belgians, came back with new federalist proposals.

The next challenge came from an Italy that was in the process of a monumental reappraisal of its foreign policy. The Italians were trying to resolve several questions. Could they pursue a policy of neutrality from a position of disarmament of the kind prescribed by the Peace Treaty? Could they adopt an independent foreign policy? Was dependence on America their only choice and finally, was the way out of their dilemma interdependence?<sup>106</sup> The deep divisions in the Italian foreign policy making establishment led to the floating of different plans and to ambassadors exceeding their briefs in trying to force their government towards their own favourite choices. Whilst these divisions persisted, Italy sent off at times contradictory signals on its attitude to the process of European cooperation. On the one hand, the Italian government pursued its own independent plans and on the other, it indicated the wish to join the Brussels Treaty, although it was rather reluctant to do so. It was felt in

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<sup>104</sup>. Ibid., minute by Roberts, 8-7-1948; CAB 128/13, CM54(48), 26-7-1948.

<sup>105</sup>. FO 371/73097/Z6699/4416/72, 18-8-1948, Annex II, 'Euro-Assembly: Statement of Principles', undated; ibid., Z7005/4416/72, 30-8-1948, top secret, minute by Jebb addressed to Bevin, Sargent and Kirkpatrick, 24-8-1948.

<sup>106</sup>. Vigezzi, B., *La dimensione Atlantica e le relazioni internazionali nel dopoguerra, 1947-49*, Milano, 1987, p. 47; ASMAE, busta: 1360, AL, lettera, Sforza a Gallarati Scotti, 20-9-1948; ACS, *minuta del verbale della riunione del Consiglio dei ministri*, 9-7-1948.

Italy that the country had made its choice between East and West at the April elections. Now it was looking for a period of consolidation, reflection and time to politically 're-educate' Italian public opinion away from neutralism. The military limitations imposed on Italy by the Peace Treaty had rendered it a liability rather than an asset to any defence organization and Italian politicians were painfully aware of this. Dissent within De Gasperi's camp with calls from left wing Christian Democrats and Saragat's associates asking for meaningful social reform, made it difficult for Italian politicians to commit their country openly to a military organization such as the BTO, especially since America's relationship with this institution had not been crystallized yet.<sup>107</sup> De Gasperi had come to the conclusion the BTO was an inadequate solution for Italy<sup>108</sup> and Manlio Brosio, the Italian Ambassador to the Soviet Union had described it as the 'alliance of the impotents'.<sup>109</sup> Whilst De Gasperi's approach was more practical and cautious, Sforza's was more enthusiastic and idealistic. The Italian government was also constrained in its choices by the fact that seventy per cent of the Italian public favoured a neutralist foreign policy and that this support cut across both party affiliation and social class.<sup>110</sup>

In view of all these problems Sforza decided to take on neutralist feelings and

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<sup>107</sup> . FO 371/73061/Z6305/273/72, 4-8-1948, secret, telegram, no.1276, Mallet to FO, 2-8-1948; FO 371/69350/J5056/6/G, secret, telegram, no. 1236, Mallet to FO, 24-7-1948.

<sup>108</sup> . De Gasperi, A., *Discorsi parlamentari: Camera dei deputati, De Gasperi alla Camera*, 4-12-1948, Vol. 1, Roma, 1985, pp. 514-15.

<sup>109</sup> . ASMAE, *busta*: 410, AP, *lettera*, Brosio a Sforza, 28-4-1948.

<sup>110</sup> . Vigezzi, op. cit., p. 50 and 53; Vigezzi, B., *La Dimensione Atlantica e Le Relazioni Internazionali nel Dopoguerra, 1947-1949*, Milano, 1987, pp. 46-52; Sforza, *Cinque Anni*, pp. 194-5; Vannicelli, op. cit., pp. 4-7; Varsori, 'Italian Diplomacy and Contrasting Perceptions', p. 79; Mammarella, op. cit., pp. 236-7; Ortona, 'Italy's Entry into the Atlantic Alliance', pp. 20-1.

transform them into support for European Unity.<sup>111</sup> He embarked on a process of educating Italian public opinion that neutrality was not an option for Italy and began to prepare it for the adoption of the Hague resolutions. On 18 July 1948, he made a speech in his capacity as the rector of the University of Perugia linking the notion of European cohesion with that of avoidance of war. He proclaimed that the 'Italians must realise that the only method of preventing a Third World War was to become the herald of such a [European] Union'. Sforza also claimed that the only way for the Continent to avoid domination by a single power again was through the inauguration of a process which would lead to a federal union.<sup>112</sup> He concluded his speech by once again sending out the message that Italy's involvement in any type of international cooperation would have to be made on the basis of absolute parity with its collaborators and only under these circumstances would it be prepared and willing to accept any curtailment of its sovereignty. Sforza's message was loud and clear. International rehabilitation and parity were his uppermost objectives. All other foreign policy aims were subordinate.<sup>113</sup> The first impact of Sforza's initiatives became apparent when in August 1948, the Italian Parliament passed a resolution in favour of the creation of a European Assembly.<sup>114</sup>

London remained silent during the remaining summer months waiting to see

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<sup>111</sup>. FO 371/73061/Z6305/273/72, 4-8-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1276, Mallet to FO, 2-8-1948.

<sup>112</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z6057/637/22, 26-7-1948, telegram, no. 179, Ward to FO, 18-8-1948; *ibid.*, Z6748/637/22, 20-8-1948, transcript of Sforza's interview with Associated Press, 15-8-1948; Cacace, *op. cit.*, p. 326; Sforza, C., *'Come far l' Europa'*, Milano, 1948, pp. 22-3; Sforza, C., *Cinque anni*, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>113</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z7760/637/22, 25-9-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1539, Ward to FO, 23-9-1948.

<sup>114</sup>. FO 371/73097/Z6699/4416/72, 18-8-1948, letter, R.W.G. MacKay, MP, to C.P. Mayhew, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, 9-8-1948; *ibid.*, Z7218/4416/72, 7-9-1948, letter, MacKay to Stafford Cripps, Treasury, 10-8-1948.



what the impact of Sforza's initiative would be and not wishing to embarrass the Italian government with an open endorsement. The Italians however were rather upset by London's silence which they perceived as lack of support from Britain. Sforza asked his ambassador in London to see Bevin and to pass on his concerns to him. When Gallarati Scotti met Bevin, the latter was in one of his most intransigent and testy moods. Despite the advice of his officials to attempt to flatter the Italians, Bevin replied abruptly to Gallarati Scotti's concern about the deterioration in Anglo-Italian relations by saying that 'he had sensed nothing of the kind'. Then he went on to reiterate his position that it was up to the Italian government to seek entry to the BTO when the time was right and that Britain's silent demeanour had been dictated by the British government's wish not to embarrass the Italian government.<sup>115</sup>

If Bevin and the Foreign Office were perplexed about the motives behind the Italian Ambassador's complaints they did not have to wait long to discover what lay behind them. Italy was testing the water. By late August it became clear that the Italian government was toying with the idea of exploring the expediency and the feasibility of being associated with the Treaty of Brussels as a means of getting an American guarantee of its security. The Italian Section of the Foreign Office learnt from its opposite number at the State Department that Tarchiani had asked if the State Department could contrive an invitation for Italian entry to the BTO. The State Department took the opportunity to impress upon the Foreign Office its wholehearted approval of Italian accession because it saw Tarchiani's initiative as an Italian declaration of disassociation with neutrality. At the Washington Talks, the Americans proposed that Atlantic defence should go hand in hand with the enlargement of the BTO, a

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<sup>115</sup>. FO 371/73199/Z6827/1392/22, 23-8-1948, secret, despatch, no. 738, Bevin to Mallet, 20-8-1948; minute by Crosthwaite, 25-8-1948.

development that took the Europeans by surprise.<sup>116</sup>

This apparent favour for the extension of the Brussels Treaty, Jebb believed, could be attributed to the American desire to precipitate European integration.<sup>117</sup> Britain's concept of the creation of a Western Union, however, differed from the American idea in many significant aspects. There was much scepticism of American intentions in military as well as in Foreign Office circles. It was feared that the US wanted the creation of a closely integrated Europe that would not allow for strong nation states or empires,<sup>118</sup> and that the US integrationist plans would undermine the Western Union concept and thus frustrate British ambitions. The cohesion of the BTO had to be safeguarded and not undermined by an untimely inclusion of disgruntled members that were not ready yet for membership which is exactly how Britain perceived Italy at this stage. It was widely thought by the British that Italian politicians were seeking association with the Five Powers as a means of revising the Italian Peace Treaty of 1947 and to gain colonial favours.<sup>119</sup> At the same time, in their dealings with Tarchiani, the Americans were rather cold and told him that Italy's accession to the BTO was a matter for the Five Powers to decide.<sup>120</sup> Gallarati

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<sup>116</sup>. FO 371/73062/Z7079/273/72, 1-9-1948, minutes by Crosthwaite, 27-8-1948 and Kirkpatrick, 28-8-1948; letter, confidential, Crosthwaite to Ward, 2-9-1948; FO 371/73062/Z6959/273/72, 27-8-1948, 25th meeting of the Permanent Commission of the BTO, 18-8-1948.

<sup>117</sup>. FO 371/73075/Z6947/2307/72, 27-8-1948, top secret, minute by Jebb, 23-8-1948; top secret, telegram, no. 9467, Jebb to Washington, 25-8-1948.

<sup>118</sup>. FO 371/73075/Z6510/2307/72, 11-8-1948, letter, Alexander to Bevin, 4-8-1948.

<sup>119</sup>. FO 371/73075/Z6947/2307/72, 27-8-1948, top secret, minute by Jebb, 23-8-1948; top secret, telegram, no. 9467, Jebb to Washington, 25-8-1948.

<sup>120</sup>. FO 371/73062/Z7079/273/72, 1-9-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 27-8-1948.

Scotti made a similar approach to the Foreign Office.<sup>121</sup> The Foreign Office was incensed by what it saw as Italian underhand tactics and raised once again its suspicions about Italian diplomatic techniques.<sup>122</sup> It interpreted Tarchiani's move in the US as an attempt to go above the heads of the Brussels Powers to gain Italian entry to their organization.<sup>123</sup> Bevin decided that all Permanent Commission members had to be informed of the Italian approach to the State Department and that their governments' views be sought.<sup>124</sup>

When the matter was discussed at the Permanent Commission of the BTO, on 2 September, it was clear that no country was anxious to see an early Italian accession to the Brussels Pact and that, in fact, the only power which did not reject Italy out of hand was Britain. The Dutch insisted that Italy should not be encouraged to apply and they proposed that the Italians should be told informally that if they decided to press the question they would be barred from entry.<sup>125</sup> The British, the French and the Belgians felt that such a move would not be necessary because they thought it unlikely that De Gasperi would run the risk of rejection by employing a direct approach and because it could rebound on the Brussels Powers by being taken as a direct snub to Italy.<sup>126</sup> The British representative faced with the insistent and sterile opposition of the Dutch, pointed out that although Britain had not committed itself in any way, it felt nevertheless, that Italian accession would bring both disadvantages and

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<sup>121</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>122</sup>. Ibid., minute by Kirkpatrick, 28-8-1948.

<sup>123</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>124</sup>. Ibid., confidential, letter, Crosthwaite to Ward, 2-9-1948; *ibid.*, Z7275/273/72, 9-9-1948, 2nd meeting of the Permanent Commission of the BTO, 2-9-1948.

<sup>125</sup>. Ibid., Z7475/273/72, 13-9-1948, top secret, 28th meeting of the Permanent Commission, Metric Doc. 116, 8-9-1948.

<sup>126</sup>. Ibid.

advantages. Thus, he proposed that the matter be assessed by the Military Committee of the BTO, as it was likely to have strategic implications.<sup>127</sup> The Military Committee of the BTO was given the twin task of assessing Italy's strategic value and its suitability for inclusion into either the BTO or to the Atlantic defensive system.<sup>128</sup>

The Military Committee adopted the assessment of the British Chiefs of Staff. They concluded that even though Italian inclusion would facilitate the defence of the Southern Flank of the Western Union and would protect the lines of communication in the Mediterranean, they could not endorse it because the Peace Treaty had turned Italy into a military liability. They went on to point out that the accession of Italy to either formation would be undesirable on two further counts. First, because any military assistance given to that country could become an embarrassment to the West. Second, they were concerned that the Soviets would use Italian membership of a Western defensive pact to gain propaganda capital. The Soviets could present it as an attempt by the West to enter into 'intrigue' with a recent enemy. The Military Committee's recommendation was that Italy should not be included in either system 'under any conditions at the present time'.<sup>129</sup> This analysis was accepted by the British government in its entirety. Throughout autumn and winter 1948 and nearly right up to the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949, Britain opposed Italian inclusion resolutely.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>128</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>129</sup>. DEFE 4/16, COS(48)131st mtg, item 7, 20-9-1948; DEFE 5/12 COS(48)210(O), 17-9-1948, top secret, 'Italy and the Brussels Treaty', Annex II, top secret, letter, Secretary of COS to the Secretary of the UK delegation of the Military Committee of the Five Powers, 23-9-1948.

<sup>130</sup>. Folly, op. cit., pp.181-90; Smith, op cit., pp. 64-78 and 83-8.

The Foreign Office continued to be perplexed by the initiatives of Tarchiani and Gallarati Scotti. The general impression was that the two Ambassadors were exceeding their briefs and that they were trying to force matters.<sup>131</sup> Crosthwaite thought this was highly likely in the case of Tarchiani, however, he could not accept that it was in the character of the Italian Ambassador in London to use such tactics, so he asked the British Embassy in Rome to shed some light on their actions.<sup>132</sup> The Rome Embassy was taken by total surprise. They had no prior warning that Italy would be seeking association with the BTO and they were certain that the Italians would be unwilling to join it prior to it being underwritten by an American military guarantee.<sup>133</sup> Sforza's economic emphasis in European collaboration and his painstaking avoidance of any direct reference to the Treaty of Brussels was the basis for Ward's conclusions. It is likely that the Embassy was 'caught on the hop' because of the absence of Sir Victor Mallet and by the fact that Ward, his *chargé d'affaires*, was not a man who had shown much finesse or sensitivity in dealing with the Italians.<sup>134</sup> Count Vittorio Zoppi, however, when approached was more than willing to fill Ward in. The Italian Foreign Ministry had been worried by the increased coolness Britain had shown towards Italy when Sforza discussed European cooperation, hence the approach to America. Zoppi also told Ward

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<sup>131</sup> . FO 371/73062/Z7079/273/72, 1-9-1948, confidential, letter, Crosthwaite to Ward, 2-9-1948; FO 371/73063/Z7553/273/72, 18-9-1948, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott 20-9-1948, Russell 22-9-48, Crosthwaite 22-9-1948, Kirkpatrick, 23-9-1948, confidential, letter, Ward to Crosthwaite, 15-9-1948; FO 371/73191/Z3464/637/22, 26-4-1948, secret, telegram, no. 721, Mallet to FO, 24-4-1948.

<sup>132</sup> . FO 371/73063/Z7553/273/72, 18-9-1948, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott, 20-9-1948, Russell and Crosthwaite, 22-9-1948.

<sup>133</sup> . Ibid., confidential, letter, Ward to Crosthwaite, 15-9-1948.

<sup>134</sup> . FO 371/73063/Z7807/273/72, 27-9-1948, secret, letter, Ward to Crosthwaite, 22-9-1948. Ward dismissed London concerns as to why the Italians felt that there was an increased coolness on it part towards them as "merely the product of the feminine sensitiveness of the Italian character and of the current national inferiority complex".

that the *Palazzo Chigi*, after intense discussion, had concluded that Italy would have to join Western institutions eventually but for the immediate future it would have to be cautious because of its military weakness, thus, the Ministry concluded that accession at this stage would expose Italy to 'great risks'.<sup>135</sup> He intimated that in view of these considerations the Italian government had come to expect Italian inclusion into the 'Western Union' as the 'last culminating step' in the process of Italian rehabilitation and restoration to its proper place in European affairs.<sup>136</sup> Zoppi continued by explaining that the Italian government was taking steps to bring this moment closer, by the re-education of Italian public opinion and by ensuring that Italy embarked on a practical programme of military planning and preparation that would enable it to defend its territory.<sup>137</sup>

No sooner had Zoppi explained all this to the British, when a new integrative initiative was launched by Italy. This was the 'Sforza Plan' which had been germinating since August when Sforza had aired his views in a memorandum to the *Quai d'Orsay*. In his speech to the Italian Chamber on 28 September 1948, Sforza unveiled his alternative plans for promoting European economic cooperation through the OEEC. This particular organization was chosen because Italy was already a member and because the Italian public would approve further cooperation within its framework. He proposed turning the OEEC into a locomotive for European integration. The OEEC would be transformed into a permanent body. Its competence was to be extended into the areas of customs unions and the social, demographic and cultural arenas. Two further institutions would be created to help the main organizational body. A political committee that would examine international political questions and

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<sup>135</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>137</sup>. Ibid.

a European Court of Justice which would arbitrate on issues that could not be solved by direct diplomatic contact.<sup>138</sup>

Sforza was trying to square the circle of Italian political reality whilst at the same time trying to promote his own preferred policy for Italy. The 'Sforza Plan' reflected Italian domestic and foreign policy concerns, as well as genuine Italian pro-integrationist sentiments. It was also meant to provide Italy with an outlet for its excess population through emigration and, at the same time, to avoid the military entanglements that accession to a defensive alliance would bring with it and which would alienate the Italian electorate.<sup>139</sup> The Plan was in line with traditional Italian integrationist thinking which had always envisaged that European Unity would come about through political and economic collaboration. Sforza was a firm believer in the European ideal, however, he had seen enough well-meaning projects in this arena collapse due to their towering ambition, most notably of all, the Briand Plan. He came to the conclusion that the first step had to be economic integration because he believed firmly that the Communists were trying to create a state of economic disorder in Europe to further the aims of the Soviet Union. The strike wave of autumn 1947 and the way the Soviets went out of their way to sabotage the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Georgi Dimitrov's proposal for a 'Balkan Union' provided the proof he needed to underpin his innate belief. Thus, the economic approach for him was the most practical one and at the same time he thought it the best approach to Europe's problems at this stage. As he put, it 'the best

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<sup>138</sup> . Cacace, op. cit., p. 326; FO 371/73099/Z9285/4416/72, 17-11-1948, FORD memorandum, 9-11-1948; FO 371/73099/Z4416/72, 17-11-1948, confidential, Consultative Council meeting, Paris, 25/26-10-1948; *ibid.*, Z9355/4416/72, 18-11-1948, top secret, minutes of the third meeting of the Consultative Council of the BTO, Doc. A/104, 25 to 26 October 1948.

<sup>139</sup> . FO 371/73079/Z8739/2307/22, 29-10-1948, top secret, letter, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 25-10-1948; FO 371/73191/Z8017/637/22, 4-10-1948, letter, confidential, record of discussion between Mallet and Sforza, 30-9-1948.

method of achieving European unity was by a gradual and empirical process'.<sup>140</sup>

The British government found no merit in these proposals. Bevin, in particular, was singularly unimpressed. The opposition of the Foreign Office to the Sforza proposals was universal and unyielding, met with derision and utter contempt. It considered them to be a totally impracticable and ill-thought out hotch-potch of ideas formulated merely to cater for neutrality sentiments in Italy and to keep Italy from any military entanglements. The Foreign Office centred its objections on the following areas. The structure of the OEEC was not designed for political cooperation. It was staffed by officials geared towards completing specific economic tasks. The membership of the OEEC was far too diverse and too scattered geographically to form a coherent political union. The OEEC was considered to be dominated by the United States and thus European cooperation through this institution went against the whole notion of a British-led Western Union. Finally, it would merely duplicate some of the BTO machinery which was working effectively and would replace it with what Kirkpatrick described as a 'ramshackle' organization. As far as the Foreign Office was concerned, these proposals were totally impractical.<sup>141</sup> However, the Foreign Office was worried that the Sforza Plan could be attractive to other OEEC members and decided to strangle the Italian proposals at birth. London made its vehement opposition to the plan known to all concerned parties and

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<sup>140</sup>. FO 371/73191/7988/637/22, 5-10-1948, telegram, no. 235, Mallet to Bevin, 1-10-1948; *ibid.*, Z8017/637/22, 4-10-1948, confidential, letter, Mallet to FO, record of a discussion between Mallet and Sforza, 30-9-1948; FO 371/73192/Z9208/637/22, 13-11-1948, letter, Gallarati Scotti to Sargent, 5-11-1948; Miller, 'Approaches to European Institution Building of Carlo Sforza, p. 59.

<sup>141</sup>. FO 371/73099/Z9285/4416/72, 17-11-1948, FORD memorandum, 9-11-1948; FO 371/73191/Z8723/637/22, 28-19-1948, telegram, no. 2308, FO to Rome, 1-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z8017/637/22, 4-10-1948, memorandum by Kirkpatrick, 11-10-1948; FO 371/73192/Z9208/637/22, 13-11-1948, minutes by Makins and Kirkpatrick, 11-11-1948.



fought back with a reiteration of its own plans for the creation of a Council of Europe.<sup>142</sup> In the end, British ideas prevailed. Sforza's plan died a silent death.

The announcement of the Sforza Plan had signalled the beginning of a difficult autumn that seemed to besiege the British and made them realise that they could not go on ignoring the new realities imposed by the Hague and French and Italian schemes for European integration. This realization was a product of pressure from both sides of the Atlantic. Churchill's rather disingenuous pronouncements had led many Americans to believe that he was all for Britain entering into a federation with Europe and that the only thing that stood between Britain and Europe was the Labour government.<sup>143</sup> Both American public opinion and the Administration had come to attach major importance to the process of European integration for many reasons. They saw it as a means of achieving political stability on the Continent, reducing its vulnerability to the Red Army, strengthening democratic institutions and enabling it to stand on its own and stop being a drain on American resources.<sup>144</sup> By October, many prominent Americans had joined in attacking the British government and this had created a negative climate in the US for the Washington Talks. Senator Fulbright publicly threatened that he would oppose further allocations of ERP unless Europe federated at once. On 30 September, Senator Dewey advocated that the American Administration use the ERP as a lever to push

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<sup>142</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9658/637/22, 29-11-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1817, Mallet to FO, 24-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z9751/637/22, 1-12-1948, minute by Russell, 10-12-1948; confidential, telegrams, nos. 1837, 1842 and 1853, Mallet to FO, 28-11-1948, 24-11-1948 and 1-12-1948; FO 371/73066/Z9623/273/72, 26-11-1948, secret, memorandum by Jebb, record of discussion with Quaroni, 20-11-1948,

<sup>143</sup>. Charlton, M., *The Price of Victory*, London, 1983, p. 137. Churchill despite his inflammatory rhetoric in the Hague was an even more reluctant advocate of British involvement in European cooperation than Bevin. He believed in the concept of Europe 'for them not for us'.

<sup>144</sup>. FO 73065/Z8760/273/72, 28-10-1948, confidential, letter, Franks to Bevin, 23-10-1948.

Europe towards federation. Both Senators referred flatteringly to France and singled Britain out as 'dragging' its feet.<sup>145</sup>

Bevin took the matter up with Marshall when he met him in Paris and complained that speeches such as Dewey's in Salt Lake City, that berated the British government and threatened America withholding financial aid to Europe if it did not federate immediately, succeeded only in causing bitter reactions in Britain which was more or less being treated as 'a small country of no account'.<sup>146</sup> He explained to Marshall that such criticisms were unfounded and unfair since it was under the British government's tutelage that Western Europe had been brought together despite the grave doubts expressed by many economists and the concerns of the impact of such a scheme on the Commonwealth. Marshall tried to appease Bevin by explaining away American reactions as misunderstandings based on Churchill's impact on American public opinion. This was an entreaty that totally misfired as Bevin riposted tartly that Churchill was a private individual who did not speak for Britain and whose Hague speech was deeply flawed as it had not taken into account the Brussels Treaty, the Commonwealth and the negotiations on the Atlantic Pact. He went on to explain that he would have to carry British public opinion with him and he was doing as much as it would stand for. Bevin also showed his utter contempt for the idea of a Parliamentary Assembly which could easily be infiltrated by communists given the composition of many of the European parliaments and which could be used by them to propound their anti-British and anti-American

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<sup>145</sup>. FO 371/73105/Z8829/8829/72, 30-10-1948, minute, Kirkpatrick to Bevin, 8-10-1948.

<sup>146</sup>. FO 371/73064/Z8447/273/72, 19-10-1948, minute by Roberts, 4-10-1948.

views.<sup>147</sup>

American criticism had also been compounded by Italian complaints. Pietro Quaroni, Italy's Ambassador to France and one of Sforza's most trusted diplomats, had no doubts that Italy would have to ditch neutrality and join the BTO. In his efforts to push Italy in this direction he had approached Roberts and told him that the prevailing opinion in Rome was that Britain was 'hanging back' in relation to Italy's association with the Western Union. Quaroni was worried that if and when Italy joined the Western Union or any other European organization, it would be America that would receive the plaudits and not the UK and that he thought it important that the British government made an effort to restore Anglo-Italian relations 'to their old happy state'.<sup>148</sup> Roberts, in turn, explained to Quaroni that if the British government appeared to be 'hanging back' it was merely because it did not wish to embarrass the Italian government by giving the impression to its enemies that it was coming under pressure from Britain to join the Pact. Quaroni suggested that one way for the British government to dispel any lingering misunderstandings with Rome, was for it to enter into confidential negotiations with Italy regarding the timing of Italian accession to the Treaty.<sup>149</sup> By now, it had become obvious that the Italians were exploring the possibility of joining the Western Union and that after Sforza's campaign Italian public opinion would be more ready to accept such a choice.<sup>150</sup> Bevin objected strongly to suggestions that he was trying to keep

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<sup>147</sup>. Ibid.; FO 371/73097/6968/4416/72, 28-8-1948, immediate, telegram, no. 1151, Harvey to FO, 27-8-1948; *ibid.*, Z6972/4416/72, 30-8-1948, minute by Montague-Brown, 30-8-1948.

<sup>148</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9051/637/22, 8-11-1948, minute by Roberts, 23-10-1948, record of discussion between Roberts and Quaroni, 23-10-1948.

<sup>149</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9208/637/22, 13-11-1948, letter, Gallarati Scotti to Sargent, 5-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z9026/637/22, 8-11-1948, telegram, no. 259, Mallet to FO, 2-11-1948.

Italy out of any schemes for European cooperation. He claimed that any reticence on his part was due to the fact that he did not want to embarrass the Italian government by appearing to be putting pressure on them to join a military organization.<sup>151</sup>

Bevin was becoming tired of being accused of trying to keep Italy out of Western institutions while the French, who were opposed to the inclusion of Italy in the BTO even more resolutely than the British, were accumulating kudos with the Italians. He felt that his views had been distorted and that somehow the issues of Italian adherence to the NATO and to the BTO had been confused. He was opposed to Italy's entry to NATO but at the same time he favoured Italian entry to the Council of Europe. He had arrived at this position because he felt it would be disastrous for the government of Italy if he appeared to be applying pressure on it to join a military alliance.<sup>152</sup>

The Foreign Office was also irritated by what was to them the obvious fact, that the Italian government had not as yet come to any firm conclusions on its position towards the BTO. On 13 October 1948, Nenni launched a scathing attack on the Italian government's foreign policy in the Chamber of the Deputies. He denounced its plans for attempting to transform the economic relations arising from the ERP into political undertakings, for secretly trying to tie Italy with the BTO and thus presenting the country with a *fait accompli*.<sup>153</sup> Sforza was quite rattled by the vehemence of Nenni's attack and denied categorically that the Italian government was in the process of concluding any

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<sup>151</sup>. Ibid., Z9051/637/22, 8-11-1948, minute by Roberts, 23-10-1948, record of discussion with Quaroni, 23-10-1948.

<sup>152</sup>. Ibid., Z9606/637/22, 26-11-1948, letter, Kirkpatrick to Mallet, 24-11-1948.

<sup>153</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z8329/637/22, 18-10-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1630, Mallet to FO, 15-10-1948.

secret treaties with other powers.<sup>154</sup> The difficulties the De Gasperi government faced in pledging Italian involvement to Western organisations were severe. The internal cohesion of the Christian Democratic Party was at stake as its left wing element, led by Gronchi, was openly against such commitments<sup>155</sup> and the survival of the coalition Cabinet was at stake because Saragat had adopted an anti-BTO policy.<sup>156</sup> On 27 November in a speech he gave to PSLI, members Saragat stated that although he supported the ERP fully he was against Italian adherence to the Treaty of Brussels because it would signify a complete rupture with Russia which in turn would adopt a policy of open hostility towards Italy and which would accentuate further internal domestic divisions. At the same time, however, he differentiated his position from that of the PSI by pronouncing that he was a strong supporter of European federalism and that he supported the Sforza proposals.<sup>157</sup> As far as the Foreign Office was concerned the position it had adopted seemed to be in complete harmony with the position elaborated by Sforza to the Italian Parliament and by De Gasperi when he told Mallet and the Italian Press that he was in favour of Italian adherence to an economic and/or political 'Western Union' and not to an organization that presupposed military commitments.<sup>158</sup>

The British government, bruised by its many critics, decided that time for

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<sup>154</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>155</sup>. FO 371/73165/9998/93/22, 9-12-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 1888, Ward to FO, 7-12-1948.

<sup>156</sup>. ACS, *minuta del verbale della riunione del Consiglio dei ministri*, 1-9-1948.

<sup>157</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9862/637/22, 6-12-1948, telegram, no. 282, Mallet to FO, 30-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z9863/637/22, 6-12-1948, speech on foreign affairs by Saragat, 27-11-1948.

<sup>158</sup>. *Ibid.*, Z9658/637/22, 29-11-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1817, Mallet to FO, 24-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z9751/637/22, 1-12-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1837, Mallet to FO, 27-11-1948.

reflection before further action was necessary. Amongst other things, the Foreign Office also felt betrayed by the policy the French government had adopted during and after the Hague Conference since, up to now, the French had objected strongly and vociferously to any suggestion of expanding the Treaty of Brussels. Yet, in Sargent's words they were ready to enter into a federation with 'all and sundry', and had gone ahead in announcing their support for the convention of a preparatory European Assembly without any prior consultation with Britain.<sup>159</sup> Kirkpatrick was entrusted with the task of reviewing and bringing all these strands together in an outline of the global situation, Britain's role in the international system and the problem of European integration. His recommendation was that Britain should not allow the US to pressurize her into 'foolish expedients', but at the same time to take action that would frustrate the various federalist schemes and strengthen anti-communist elements on the Continent.<sup>160</sup> Bevin was not prepared to be steamrollered into accepting a concept of European integration as proposed by the federalists and he was becoming irate with the criticism directed against Britain and at him personally that he was 'slack' in the establishment of the Western Union. He had never conceived the possibility of the creation of a federal European Parliament nor the formation of common standing institutions. His project had envisaged the promotion of close cooperation as and when issues arose on an informal inter-governmental basis. Its institutional *modus operandi* would resemble that of the Commonwealth, 'an association of fully sovereign states bound together by intangible bonds of sympathy and common interest'.<sup>161</sup> In

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<sup>159</sup>. FO 371/73097/Z6885/4416/72, 25-8-1948, letter, Harvey to FO, 20-8-1948; letter, Sargent to Harvey, 28-8-1948; CAB 128/13, CM59(48), 10-9-1948.

<sup>160</sup>. FO 371/73105/Z8829/8829/72, 30-10-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick addressed to Bevin, 8-10-1948.

<sup>161</sup>. FO 371/73097/Z6885/4416/72, 25-8-1948, letter, Harvey to FO, 20-8-1948; letter, Sargent to Harvey, 28-8-1948.

view of these federalist developments the Cabinet decided that first, a statement had to be issued to explain that the British government's attitude was not 'obstructive or selfish', that its objective was to secure a 'realistic' and 'effective' process to achieve a United Europe and second, that the matter had to be discussed with the Commonwealth Prime Ministers.<sup>162</sup> The October meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers made it obvious that they did not favour the Hague attempts to establish a federal Europe.<sup>163</sup>

Bevin had the opportunity to elaborate on Britain's position in a rather detailed and lengthy reply to Eden, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, when the latter asked him to outline his alternatives to the proposed European Assembly. Bevin had said that 'Britain had to be in two places at the same time. It had to remain at the centre of the Commonwealth and also [it] must be European'. In the same reply, he took the opportunity to outline his gradualist and evolutionary approach towards European integration by stating that Britain would have to approach its two tasks 'step by step, by treaties, agreements' but he stressed that 'not until the questions of defence and economic cooperation and the necessary political devices had been organized can it be possible ... to establish some sort of Assembly which can deal with such questions which we as governments have effectuated'.<sup>164</sup>

At the 25-26 October meeting of the Consultative Council, Bevin accepted, grudgingly, that a Brussels Pact Committee of Inquiry should to be set up to

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<sup>162</sup>. CAB 128/13, CM59(48), 10-9-1948.

<sup>163</sup>. FO 371/73099/Z9386/4416/72, 19-11-1948, confidential, telegram, 'Western Union', 29-10-1948; FO 371/73100/Z9997/72, 7-12-1948, letter, Bevin to Dalton, 6-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10052/4416/72, 9-12-48; CAB 128, CM68(48), 6-12-1948.

<sup>164</sup>. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, 1947-48, Cols. 82-91 and 95-102, London, 1948, speech by Bevin, 15-9-1948.

examine the merits of the integrative proposals but he made it clear that he wanted any European Assembly to be limited to the Five Powers. The composition of the British element of the Committee revealed much about the intentions of the British government. Hugh Dalton, the Chancellor of the Duchy, Sir Edward Bridges, the Secretary to the Cabinet, Lord Inverchapel, the former Ambassador in Washington, Professor Wade and Gladwyn Jebb all of whom with the exception of Jebb, were not particularly impressed with the plans on the table.<sup>165</sup>

Under pressure, the British government decided that it had to come up with its own counterproposals which would aim at not giving away too much, satisfying public opinion, curb the Hague federalist enthusiasm and preserve the sovereignty of the member states.<sup>166</sup> The 'Council of Ministers', proposed by the British would be run along intergovernmental lines similar to those of the United Nations. The system would be flexible enough to expand to encompass Germany and would solve the problem of Italian association with European institutions thus, overcoming the existing difficulties with Italian admittance to the BTO.<sup>167</sup> The British plan was also aimed at answering the problem of further consolidation in Europe, and, at the same time, it aimed to ensure that the new organization would not interfere with the work of the BTO, the OEEC and the organization which the Washington Talks would give birth to. Above all, it would allow for European consolidation without impairing the existing links with the Commonwealth. As the Foreign Office admitted, from its point of view the new organization would be more realistic because it would leave the

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<sup>165</sup>. Pimlott, *op. cit.*, pp. 565-9; Cacace, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

<sup>166</sup>. CAB 128/13, CM68(48), 4-11-1948.

<sup>167</sup>. FO 371/73064/Z8540/273/72, 22-10-1948, minute by Bevin addressed to the Prime Minister, 18-10-1948; minute by Attlee, 18-10-1948; *ibid.*, Z8418/273/72, 18-10-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 15-10-1948.



conduct of foreign policy, military and economic affairs 'where it belong[ed]', namely, with the governments of individual states which were answerable through their parliaments to the public.<sup>168</sup> For Bevin, however, it would have been preferable if the scheme had started with the BTO powers first and expanded later. Attlee agreed that Bevin ought to bring the matter up in the next Consultative Council of the BTO, on 25th November 1948.<sup>169</sup>

During the course of these developments, the Italian government gained a renewed vigour in its efforts to educate and induce Italian public opinion into acceptance of Italian membership of Western organizations. The renewed and systematic crusade was a product of the realization in Italian government circles that their scope for manoeuvre had diminished alarmingly.<sup>170</sup> It also reflected the ongoing debate within the Italian government about what type of commitment Italy should enter into and whether Italy should join security organizations such as the one discussed at Washington.

By mid-November Sforza was ready to announce publicly and unequivocally that the government was under no illusion that equidistance and neutrality were not viable foreign policy choices for Italy and he let it be known that he was fully committed to steering Italy into political cooperation with the Brussels powers because, as he put it, European cooperation was the only option for Europe to emerge from 'out of chaos'. He proclaimed that 'the aim of Italian foreign policy was to obtain as much security as the times will allow and any policy contrary

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<sup>168</sup>. FO 371/73099/Z9286/4416/72, 17-11-1948, FO memorandum, unsigned, undated.

<sup>169</sup>. FO 371/73064/Z8540/273/72, 22-10-1948, minute by Bevin addressed to the Prime Minister, 18-10-1948; minute by Attlee, 18-10-1948; *ibid.*, Z8418/273/72, 18-10-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 15-10-1948.

<sup>170</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9395/637/22, 19-11-1948, minute by Roberts, 17-11-1948.

to this was a policy of war'.<sup>171</sup> De Gasperi joined in the efforts to convince the citizens of his country that his government had no other option but to ditch neutralism. He proclaimed emphatically 'there is only but one choice between cooperation and isolation' and he went on to liken isolation to asphyxiation, economic stagnation and a defenceless state.<sup>172</sup> The Italian government took the campaign of Italian inclusion into Western European organizations directly to the continental capitals. De Gasperi gave a series of speeches in Paris and Brussels. He declared that Italy had to 'unite with the other states of Western Europe in order to maintain peace and protect Western civilization from the menace of communism'.<sup>173</sup>

Mallet watched these developments closely. He concluded that the Italian government, in view of the state of public opinion and because of the opposition of the Gronchi and Saragat to any military entanglements, would try to associate Italy with the Western alliance system by stages, namely, that it would pursue economic and political cooperation and would try to avoid incurring military commitments. He exhorted London to encourage and support the Italian government's bid to associate Italy with European political institutions, when it felt comfortable enough to adopt 'an active foreign policy'. Failure by London to do so would cause deep resentment Mallet warned, because of the existence of feelings of inferiority and the desire by Italians to

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<sup>171</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9363/637/22, 19-11-1948, telegram, no. 1774, Mallet to FO, report on Sforza's speech at Massa Cavvara, 16-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z9411/637/22, 19-11-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1778, Mallet to FO, 19-11-1948.

<sup>172</sup>. FO 371/Z8985/637/22, 29-10-1948, transcript of De Gasperi's interview to *Messaggero*, 24-10-1948.

<sup>173</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9521/637/22, 24-11-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 24-11-1948; restricted, telegram, no. 1802, Mallet to FO, 23-11-1948.

be noticed and taken seriously by the other powers'.<sup>174</sup> Mallet felt that the Italian situation was replete with dangers for Britain. Alienation and feelings of injustice could lead the Italians to throw their lot in with French federalist plans rather than support Bevin's gradualist approach. He warned that there was an accumulation of bitterness towards Britain amongst Italians and that 'it could leave a legacy of frustration and resentment among the comparatively small class who mould Italian foreign policy and who are trying to keep their country away from Communism and lead it towards a Western Union'. He recommended that since it would be only a matter of time before Italy was accepted by Western European structures, it would be better from the point of view of Anglo-Italian relations if the British government showed more 'sympathy for Italy's efforts to associate itself with the process and it would help to defuse the awkwardness and tensions created by the ongoing sore of the colonial question'.<sup>175</sup>

Mallet also astutely observed that Italy would not be prepared to join a 'Mediterranean Pact', even if Britain and America were parties to such an arrangement, nor would it be satisfied with offers of unilateral guarantees by the Atlantic powers.<sup>176</sup> During this whole period, British policy makers had failed to resolve the ambiguity with which they regarded Italy. The dilemma of whether Italy was a Western European country or, essentially a Mediterranean one, remained unresolved. This ambivalence surfaced once more on the question of whether Italy should become a member of a Western European

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<sup>174</sup>. Ibid. Z9751/637/22, 1-12-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1853, Mallet to FO, 1-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10347/637/22, 20-12-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1992, Mallet to FO, 17-12-1948; minute by Jebb, 21-12-1948.

<sup>175</sup>. Ibid., Z9627/637/22, 26-11-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 276, Mallet to FO, 24-11-1948.

<sup>176</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9411/637/22, 19-11-1948, secret, telegram, no. 1778, Mallet to FO, 19-11-1948.

group or a Mediterranean one. The British Military considered Italy to be essentially a Mediterranean country.<sup>177</sup> Bevin too, regarded Italy more as a Mediterranean nation and less as a Western European one.<sup>178</sup> The problem with this perception was that it was diametrically opposed to the one held by the Italians themselves. At no point was the Italian government prepared to join a Mediterranean grouping rather than a Western European or Atlantic one. The Italian Foreign Ministry had also reached the conclusion that such a Mediterranean pact would be hopelessly weak and would not be able to protect Italy convincingly.<sup>179</sup>

In view of this situation, the Western Department advised that Italy would have to be involved in the consultative process of setting up the Council of Europe.<sup>180</sup> Bevin intimated to Sir Victor Mallet that he had given considerable thought to how to incorporate Italy in European collaboration schemes and that he had concluded that the best way forward was through the Council of Europe.<sup>181</sup> In mid-December Bevin praised the Italian government for the steps it had taken to further the course of European cooperation. He also undertook to assure Gallarati Scotti that British friendship towards Italy was based on a

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<sup>177</sup>. DEFE 6/5, JP(48)15 Final, top secret, 18-2-1948; top secret, JP(48)1(S) Final, 16-3-1948.

<sup>178</sup>. FO 371/73046/273/72, 2-2-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 202, FO to Rome, 24-1-1948.

<sup>179</sup>. ASMAE, *busta*: 368, AM, *telespresso*, T. 1124, Sforza a Brosio, Gallarati Scotti, Quaroni e Tarchiani, 14-8-1948; ASMAE, *busta*: 405, *lettera*, Brosio a Sforza, 28-4-1948; *ibid.*, AP, *telespresso*, T. 482, Quaroni al Ministero, 1-4-1948; ASMAE, *busta*: 1360, AL, *telespresso*, T.4117, Gallarati Scotti a Sforza, 10-8-1948.

<sup>180</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9793/637/22, 2-12-1948, minute by Brown, 2-12-1948.

<sup>181</sup>. FO 371/73066/Z9623/273/72, 26-11-1948, minute by Jebb, 25-11-1948; FO 371/73199/Z10306/1392/22, 20-12-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 1069, Bevin to Mallet, 16-12-1948.

firm foundation.<sup>182</sup>

The Italians were now showing a keen interest in the scheme outlined by Bevin. On 29 November, Pietro Quaroni met Jebb over dinner and asked him about Britain's plans for the Council of Europe. The two men had known each other for years and they had developed a good relationship. Quaroni wanted to know if Bevin would have any objections to Italian inclusion because, he said, there was the widespread impression in Italy that Britain was excluding Italy from international organizations because it was an ex-enemy. Jebb explained that Bevin wanted Italy to be a founding member of the Council and that he harboured no punitive feelings towards Italy. His only reasons for opposing Italian inclusion in the BTO at this point was that Italy was restricted militarily by a precise and severe Treaty that made it difficult for Italy to defend itself, let alone to come to the aid of other countries as specified by the Brussels Treaty.<sup>183</sup> Jebb fleshed out Bevin's ideas on the Council of Ministers which he described as a British attempt to present the ideal of a United Europe in a concrete and physical way and which would be a forum in which the direction of the European project could be examined. There would be no need for a written constitution for the Council so that over the years it could be allowed to develop into a distinct European entity.<sup>184</sup>

The Italians were sufficiently intrigued to want to explore Bevin's plans further. In late December, Robert Schuman, the French Minister and De Gasperi met

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<sup>182</sup>. Ibid., Z10351/1392/22, 20-12-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 1935, 20-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10352/1392/22, 20-12-1948, minutes by Brown, 13-12-1948, Kirkpatrick, 14-12-1948 and Crosthwaite, 21-12-1948.

<sup>183</sup>. FO 371/73066/Z9623/273/72, 26-11-1948, secret, memorandum by Jebb, 26-11-1948; record of conversation with the Italian Ambassador in Paris, 20-11-1948.

<sup>184</sup>. Ibid.

at Cannes where they sealed their decision to proceed with the establishment of a Franco-Italian Customs Union and agreed that Italy would be invited to be a founding member of any future European system. At the same time the Italians took the opportunity to express their doubts on the French proposals for a European Assembly because the scheme had the propensity to allow communists to be selected as candidates which would give them the ability to sabotage the organization from within.<sup>185</sup> For Italy, the attraction of the British proposal lay in the fact that it did not talk about proportional representation for all parliamentary political forces and that it allowed for selectivity, so that each government could determine the most suitable means of nominating its national delegates for the Council of Europe.<sup>186</sup> The Italians candidly admitted that their preferred scheme would be a compromise between the French and British proposals.<sup>187</sup> Sforza had other reasons for supporting the British scheme. He believed that speed was of the essence at this stage because the Communists in both France and Italy were in a state of disarray. He did not want to squander any time on prolonged discussions and on disagreements that would give the Communists the opportunity to regroup and frustrate European integration. In his view the new organization would be 'like a bottle and all would depend upon what was poured into it'.<sup>188</sup> Sforza considered it of vital importance that Britain was not a reluctant party to any such organization and he also preferred it to take the lead in Europe once again.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup>. Cacace, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

<sup>186</sup>. FO 371/73100/Z9980/4414/72, 8-12-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1795, Harvey to FO, 8-12-1948.

<sup>187</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z10606/637/22, 31-12-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 1964, Mallet to FO, 28-12-1948; *ibid.*, Z10632/673/22, 31-12-1948, minute by Crosthwaite, 31-12-1948; confidential, telegram, no. 1977, Mallet to FO, 31-12-1948; Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 60; Sforza, *op. cit.*, p. 114-5.

<sup>188</sup>. *Ibid.*

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

Bevin's proposals were also endorsed by Norway and Ireland which felt more comfortable with them.<sup>190</sup> This blunted some of the thrust of the Hague proposals. Furthermore, the British announcement had come in time to placate the American Senate and American public opinion prior to the vote for the appropriations for the second year of the ERP.<sup>191</sup> However, when the BTO Committee of Inquiry was able to report on its findings on the 'European Assembly' idea in December, its recommendations displeased Bevin greatly and he continued to oppose the principle of an autonomous European Parliamentary Assembly to the bitter end by exercising his power of veto.<sup>192</sup> By now British policy had become defensive and reactive on issues of European cooperation. Suddenly, Bevin had lost the mantle of leadership to Schuman. This change in power relations between Britain and France became apparent by late January 1949 when Bevin had to defer to Schuman and drop his increasingly sterile opposition to the Assembly. Schuman simply announced that France would go ahead to negotiate and achieve the creation of a new integrative organization that contained an Assembly even without British support or involvement. In view of the entrenched French position Bevin had to concur.<sup>193</sup> Later that month the BTO powers invited Italy to take part in the preparatory stages of the Council of Europe. Bevin had championed Italy's inclusion as soon as he had reconciled himself to the Council of Europe as a means of untangling the issue of Italy's participation in Western European

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<sup>190</sup>. FO 371/73100/Z9996/4416/72, 7-12-1948, minutes by Kirkpatrick, 4-12-1948 and Jebb, 30-11-1948.

<sup>191</sup>. FO 371/73066/Z9623/273/72, 26/11/1948, secret, memorandum by Jebb, 26-11-1948; record of conversation with the Italian Ambassador in Paris, 20-11-1948.

<sup>192</sup>. CAB 128/13, CM78(48), 6-12-1948; Loth, W., *The Division of the World, 1941-1955*, London, 1988, p. 222.

<sup>193</sup>. *Ibid.*; Warner, 'The Labour Governments and the Unity of Western Europe', p. 70.

integrative organizations as opposed to that of NATO membership.<sup>194</sup> Formal invitations were extended on 7 March 1949. On the next day De Gasperi and the Italian Cabinet approved the participation of Italy in these negotiations. The urgency with which the decision was taken denotes the eagerness of the Italian government to be involved in the process from the first stages of consultation not only in order to accomplish its European ideals but more practically to counteract Communist attacks for joining NATO by entering an alliance ostensibly dedicated to peace.<sup>195</sup>

Despite their divergent approaches and aspirations for the Council of Europe both the Italians and the British were disillusioned.<sup>196</sup> Their relations as working partners in the Council were typified by bouts of cooperation and friction. Bevin's apparent acquiescence did not mean he and the British government had ceased in their efforts to limit the competence and to minimize the importance of the nascent organization. Britain worked hard to ensure that the Council of Europe had no influence over European defence matters which remained firmly under the province of NATO and BTO. This principle was enshrined in the preamble of the Council.<sup>197</sup> Economic matters were also under the jurisdiction of the OEEC.<sup>198</sup> The British attitude to the Council was also evident in the vehemence with which they opposed the French proposal for the

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<sup>194</sup>. CAB 128/13, CM78(48), 6-12-1948.

<sup>195</sup>. Sforza, C., *Cinque Anni*, p. 208; De Gasperi, A., *Discorsi Politici*, Vol. I, *Discorso del 15-5-1949*, p. 235; Cacace., op. cit., p. 328.

<sup>196</sup>. Bullock, op. cit., pp. 702 and 730; Nugent, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>197</sup>. FO 371/79935/ZW224/1072/170, 22-4-1949, confidential, Annex, CE(PREP)M 1st FINAL, first meeting of Preparatory Conference, 28-3-1949; FO 371/79941/ZW379/1072/170, 7-5-1949, confidential, CE(MIN)P8 Final, 5-5-1949.

<sup>198</sup>. FO 371/79931/ZW8/1072/170, 1-4-1949, minute, by Rose, record of discussion between Jebb and the Treasury, 20-3-1949; confidential, letter, Rose to E.R. Copleston, Treasury, 2-4-1949.



new organization to be called 'European Union'.

The success of the Council of Europe was extremely important for Italy. It saw it as a means for reclaiming its status as a major Continental power. In order to be treated as one of the 'Big Three' and an equal within the organization, Italy was prepared to make financial sacrifices by agreeing to contribute to the organization's coffers equally with France and Britain. This amounted to 26% of the whole institutional expenditure.<sup>199</sup> The Italians also hoped that the new organization would fire the imagination of Europeans to such a degree as to act as a major ideological pull away from the lure of communism and that it would eventually become the locomotive for the realization of the federal ideal. Thus they, along with the French, proposed that the new organization had to be called the 'European Union'.<sup>200</sup>

The Italians indicated displeasure with the British insistence of giving the Assembly of the new institution what they regarded as such a bland and boring name as the 'Council of Europe'. They acquiesced unwillingly in British insistence only to press for a more explicit emphasis to be given in the preamble of the prospective Treaty to the ideals which had led to the preparatory conference and the resultant organization.<sup>201</sup> Sforza decided that the matter should not rest until he had one last chance to air it at the St. James'

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<sup>199</sup>. FO 371/79972/ZW1571/1072/170, 15-8-1949, UK brief, no.12, item 1(1), Committee of Ministers; FO 371/79950/ZW855/1072/170, 18-6-1949, minute by Brown, 18-6-1949; FO 371/79945/ZW529/1072/170, 23-5-1949, telegram, no. 564, Harvey to FO, conversation between Marquis Cavaletti, Minister, Italian Embassy in Paris and Ashley-Clarke, 21-5-1949.

<sup>200</sup>. FO 371/79937/ZW256/1072/170, 25-4-1949, minute by W.I. Mallet, 19-4-1949; FO 371/79938/ZW318/1072/170, minute by Jebb, 30-4-1949; *ibid.*, ZW327/1072/170, 2-5-1949, confidential, CE(MIN)AGENDA, item 4, 3-5-1949.

<sup>201</sup>. FO 371/79934/ZW194/1072/170, 19-4-1949, confidential, CE(PREP)P7, 28-3-1949; FO 371/79935/ZW224/1072/170, 22-4-1949, CE(PREP)M, 1st meeting, Annex 'D', 28-3-1949; ACS, Carte Sforza, *Busta*: 5, undated, '*Appunti, prememorie e note*', 1949-1950'.

meeting, prior to the signing of the Council of Europe Treaty and he went on to make his disappointment clear in his statement at the signing of the Statute of the Council of Europe on 5th May 1949. He proclaimed that Europe would recover its strength only through union and he launched into a federalist treatise which concluded that the recently signed treaty would be regarded as a success only when its signatories were able 'to create a Europe in which national boundaries [were] not written in ink but in pencil'.<sup>202</sup> Sforza's torrential and ardent endorsement of ever closer European cooperation contrasted sharply with Bevin's rather terse statement in which he said that he had hopes that this agreement would lay 'the foundations of something new and hopeful in European life'.<sup>203</sup> These two statements showed clearly the diametrically opposed foreign policy priorities of the two governments vis-à-vis European cooperation at this time.

The Italians tried hard to upgrade the institution and Italy's role within it. They accepted financial commitments that bordered on self-sacrifice in return for ensuring that Italian nationals serving on the secretariat would be treated on a basis of equality with the two other powers.<sup>204</sup> They worked doggedly to ensure that Italy's position would be strong and set up an office at Strasbourg with the task of overseeing the conduct of Italian relations with the Council of Europe.<sup>205</sup> All these efforts were discouraged by Britain which was determined to downplay the importance of the institution<sup>206</sup> and no matter how eager Italy

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<sup>202</sup>. FO 371/79941/ZW387/1072/170, 9-5-1949, statement by Count Carlo Sforza, 9-5-1949; FO 371/79943/ZW410/1072/170, 10-5-1949, CE(MIN) Revised, St. James' Conference, 3rd to 5th May 1949, 10-5-1949; Cacace, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>203</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>204</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>205</sup>. FO 371/79952/ZW966/1072/170, 2-7-1949, letter, Rome to Western Department, 30-6-1949.

<sup>206</sup>. Ibid.

was to see the new institution succeed, Sforza was not prepared to allow his own ideological leaning to drive a wedge in Anglo-Italian relations. He believed firmly that the whole process would be more credible and stronger with Britain inside it rather than out and he was prepared to pace himself to accommodate Britain. Typical of this attitude was his discussion with Mallet, during which it became clear that though Sforza was prepared to contemplate and endorse the dilution of his country's sovereignty, he was also quite amenable to British concerns. He went out of his way to say that he did not believe that it would be beneficial for European collaboration if the pace towards European federation was forced and that 'questions of sovereignty had to be handled with caution and delay'.<sup>207</sup>

Ultimately, the two countries were able to cooperate successfully and closely where matters of common interest arose. Issues of security and defence were uppermost priorities for both governments. Both were concerned that the Assembly of the Council of Europe could never be absolutely safe from communist infiltration but both countries felt that if they drafted any exclusion clauses as to the political composition of the national delegations to the Assembly, then the Council of Europe would be open to attacks by an increasingly belligerent and vocal Soviet Union. The latter had denounced the establishment of the Council as a mere 'colonial appendage' to the US and Britain, a source of cheap manpower and resources and a base for an aggressive war against the Soviet Union.<sup>208</sup> The two governments worked tirelessly to ensure that at the preparatory conference for the establishment of a Council of Europe responsibility for the nomination of national delegates

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<sup>207</sup>. FO 371/79964/ZW1346/1072/170, 2-8-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 182, Mallet to FO, 28-7-1949; Miller, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>208</sup>. FO 371/79944/ZW442/1072/170, 13-5-1949, confidential, 'Soviet Monitor', 7-5-1949.

should fall on the national parliament of each member country and that national parliaments ought to guarantee that each nominee would undertake 'to contribute loyally to the establishment of Democratic institutions in a United Europe'.<sup>209</sup> This wording succeeded in excluding any self-declared communists from participation and eventually, most participating governments stated that they intended to appoint their delegates to the Consultative Assembly from all parliamentary parties except from those belonging to communist parties. In the case of Italy the delegation was made up of seven members of the Senate and seven members of the Deputies. The election method was based on an absolute majority vote which ensured the exclusion of the PCI and the PSI.<sup>210</sup>

Britain and Italy also saw eye to eye on the drafting of the criteria for the expansion of the organization and worked in tandem to erode the objections of some of their partners. Both countries attached great importance to ensuring that the new organization would be flexible enough to allow other Western countries to accede to it and worked to curb the exclusivity the Scandinavians wanted to impose on it.<sup>211</sup> Sforza sided with Bevin to ensure that Greece and Turkey were not excluded because of their dubious democratic credentials and in Turkey's case because of its different religion. Greece and Turkey were to be invited to join the Council of Europe at its inaugural meeting.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup>. Ibid., ZW25/1072/170, 1-4-1949, confidential, paper, no. CE(PREP)P3, 28-3-1949; ibid., ZW112/1072/170, 11-4-1948, recommendations of the European Movement to the Conference of Ambassadors for the establishment of a Council of Europe, 6-4-1949.

<sup>210</sup>. FO 371/79951/ZW918/1072/170, 29-6-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 838, Mallet to FO, 28-6-1949; FO 371/79965/ZW1356/1072/170, 2-8-1949, restricted, despatch, no. 248, Mallet to Attlee, 29-7-1949.

<sup>211</sup>. FO 371/79943/ZW410/1072/170, 10-5-1949, CE(MIN), Revised, 10-5-1949.

<sup>212</sup>. FO 371/79956/ZW1109/1072/170, 13-7-1949, confidential, letter, Gallarati-Scotti to Jebb, 12-7-1949; FO 371/79964/ZW1340/1072/170, 2-8-1949, confidential, telegram, no. 999, Mallet to FO, 29-7-1949.

Cooperation of this kind, however, served only to mask the fact that the relations between the two countries had been transformed forever. Italy was no longer reliant on Britain and Britain was less interested in Italian affairs than it had been in the past. This transformation was the result of a number of factors. British and Western European economic and military weakness in the late 1940s made the achievement of a British-led 'Western Union' which would be on a par with the Soviets and the Americans impossible. The realisation of this state of affairs and the Continental enthusiasm for federalism led Bevin to move away from any binding ties with Europe, to retreat to the Empire and simultaneously towards cultivating a closer relationship with the United States. The Sterling devaluation crisis of September 1949 acted only as a footnote to this choice.<sup>213</sup> In contrast, the impact on Italy of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty had an almost liberating effect in the sense that now its security was underwritten in unequivocal terms by the US it could embark on its ultimate objective which was to achieve power through European cooperation and interdependence. However, above all, Anglo-Italian relations had changed as a result of Italy's speedy international rehabilitation, further endorsed by the signing of NATO and its almost total dependence on America.

### **Conclusion.**

Bevin had included Italy in his original concept of the Western Union but his cautious approach and Italy's specific problems had led him to the conclusion that Italy could not be one of the core countries. The delay in Italian accession

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<sup>213</sup>. CAB 129/37, top secret, CP(49)208, memorandum by Bevin: 'European Policy', 18-10-1949; FO 371/76384/Z3114/3/500, 27-5-1949, top secret, FO memorandum: PUSC(22) Final, 'A Third World Power or Western Consolidation', 9-5-1949; minutes by Strang, 23-3-1949 and Bevin, 27-3-1949; Bullock, op. cit., pp. 701-2, 730 and 733; Newton, S., 'Britain, the Sterling Area and European Integration, 1945-50', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 13, 1985, pp. 163-82; Newton, S., 'The 1949 Sterling Crisis and British Policy towards European Integration', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 11, 1985, pp. 169-82; Young, op. cit., pp. 26-7.

made the Foreign Office conclude that because of Italy's weak defences and the BTO's own limitations, it could not assure the security of Italy.<sup>214</sup> The eventful summer of 1948 had a catalytic effect on the BTO and on Italian accession to it. The federalist enthusiasm unleashed by the Hague Conference had alienated Bevin<sup>215</sup> and the Berlin Blockade had shown that the BTO could not take any meaningful action to protect Western interests against Soviet encroachment.<sup>216</sup> It was not until America assumed responsibility that the paralysis was lifted. In the meanwhile, Italy had embarked on an exploration of schemes of European integration for fear of being left out in an environment which it gave it no guarantee that its prospective allies would be ever be willing to accept it as a member for any of their schemes.<sup>217</sup> Thus, Italy sent confused messages in its approach to European cooperation that irritated and frustrated Britain. By now, the issue of Italian adherence to the BTO had become entangled with the secret negotiations involving the creation of a North Atlantic defence system. In fact, Italian motives in the discussions for expanding the BTO to include Italy had become a smokescreen for the real aspirations of the Italian government at this time. In the dying months of 1948, the British were absorbed in efforts to finalize the arrangements for the creation of NATO and to ensure that Italy would be neither a founding member of NATO nor a member of the BTO.<sup>218</sup> The Council of Europe was accepted by Britain as a mere sop to America and the Continent and also as a means of separating

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<sup>214</sup>. FO 371/73060/Z5543/273/72, 8-7-1948, top secret, FO memorandum, undated; FO 371/73105/Z8829/8829/72, 30-10-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick to Bevin, 8-10-1948.

<sup>215</sup>. Young, *Britain and European Unity*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>216</sup>. Schlaim, A., 'Britain, the Berlin Blockade and the Cold War', *International Affairs*, Vol. 60, 1984, p. 11.

<sup>217</sup>. FO 371/73191/Z4437/637/22, letter, top secret, Jebb to Ward, 5-5-48.

<sup>218</sup>. Bullock, *op. cit.*, pp. 542, 643-6 and 670-1.

issues of defence and European cooperation thus relieving the pressure on Britain to incorporate Italy into NATO. Bevin disliked all European proposals for a European Assembly which he considered as being impractical. He articulated plans that sapped away some of the vigour expounded at the Hague Congress and 'intended ... to proceed in an orderly manner and to build the walls of a European Union before the roof [was] put on'<sup>219</sup> and he used this aphorism once again to counter Italian complaints that Britain was 'hanging back'.<sup>220</sup> Bevin, reflecting the mood of the British Cabinet, did his utmost to ensure that the new organization was nothing more than a powerless 'talking shop'. As some of the dust of the turbulent summer and autumn of 1948 settled and after the signing of the NATO and the Council of Europe Treaties in spring 1949, what became clear was that during this period Britain and Italy had moved to antithetical positions with regards to European integration. Britain towards disassociation from European cooperation and Italy towards fervent support of federalism. During this period, Italy had repositioned its foreign policy in such a way as to succeed in becoming both a member of the Council of Europe, a major force deciding the process and shape of the future of Europe and a founding member of NATO.

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<sup>219</sup>. Ibid., p. 615-626 and 765; Young, *Britain and European Unity*, pp. 21; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, Fifth Series*, 1947-48, Vol. 456, Cols. 96-107, London, 1948.

<sup>220</sup>. FO 371/73192/Z9051/637/22, 8-11-1948, minute by Roberts, 23-10-1948; record of discussion with Quaroni, 23-10-1948.

## Conclusion

The end of the AMG regime in Italy on 1 January 1946 and the restoration of the country to Italian jurisdiction, with the exception of the disputed areas of Alto Adige and Venezia Giulia, ushered in a new period in the relations of Italy with the former AMG powers. Britain and Italy had to learn to interact as two sovereign nations and to replace their previously fraught relationship with a close but yet less restricting one. For Britain the transition to treating Italy as a mature nation was not always an easy one. There were several reasons for this. Britain's overriding goal in foreign policy was based on the premise of frustrating Soviet designs and maintaining British regional and imperial interests and these tasks were sometimes incompatible with narrow Italian interests.<sup>1</sup> The adoption by Italy of what Maier has described as 'a strategy of weakness' and 'the politics of dependancy'<sup>2</sup> did not play as well in London as it did in Washington.<sup>3</sup> The tendency of the Italian government to co-opt the United States as its advocate greatly irritated Britain. For Britain, the adoption of such a policy on the part of Italy, put it in the invidious position of never being able to live up to Italian expectations merely because it was pursuing a more complex policy in the region than that of the United States, especially *vis-à-vis* Yugoslavia. Britain did not wish to cut off all contact with Yugoslavia and isolate it, not because it had any illusions that it could replace the pervasive influence of the Soviet Union at this stage but simply because the Foreign

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<sup>1</sup>. Arcidiacono, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-266; Ellwood, 'Al tramonto dell' impero britannico', *op. cit.*, pp. 73-92; Ross, G., 'Foreign Office Attitudes to the Soviet Union, 1941-45', pp. 521-40 Rothwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-290, *passim*; Watt, 'Britain the United States and the Opening of the Cold War', pp. 50-5 and 57-9; Woodward, *op. cit.*, 471-91; Adamthwaite, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Kent, 'British Policy', pp. 139-52; Varsori, 'Great Britain and Italy', pp. 188-98.

<sup>2</sup>. Maier, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-1.

<sup>3</sup>. FO 371/79346/Z2335/10535/170, 15-3-1949, minutes by Pemberton-Pigott, 7-3-1949 and Sir Eyre Crowe, 4-11-1919; *ibid.*, Z4359/10535/170, 16-6-1949, minutes by Shuckburgh, 26-6-1949 and Strang, 30-6-1949.



Office and Bevin had reached the same conclusion that Churchill and Eden had reached before them namely, that by securing a 'working relationship' with Tito and by 'not pulling out of Yugoslavia altogether' could perhaps contain him and lessen the threat he presented to Italy and Greece especially whilst the Civil War in Greece was still unfolding.<sup>4</sup> These concerns became apparent in Britain's 'tightrope act' in attempting to settle the Italian war criminality problem. British efforts to 'hand over' to Yugoslavia UNWCC registered Italian war criminals should be seen in this light and not as a mere punitive reflex. This task was hampered by the reluctance of the Americans and Italians to implement a policy of extraditing Italian citizens to Yugoslavia and because of the belated realisation that the unpopularity of this policy could harm De Gasperi's government and thereby help the Communists. In view of this, the British showed that they were prepared to modify their policy and empower Italy to deal with such issues.<sup>5</sup> The United States soon became a regular critic of British actions in Italy and tensions in Anglo-American relations over that country led to tensions, worsening relations between the two and exposed their

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<sup>4</sup>. FO 371/59400/R1288/58/92, 25-1-1946, letter, Sargent to Stapleton, 29-1-1946; Lane, *Britain, the Cold War and Yugoslav Unity*, pp. 97-8; Lane, 'Putting Britain Right with Tito', passim; Bohlen, op. cit., p. 253; FRUS, 1945, Vol. V, pp. 1229, 1233, 1266 and 1291-4; FRUS, 1946, Vol. II, p. 728; FRUS, 1946, Vol. VI., 869-70 and 887-88; Alexander, G.M., *The Prelude to the Truman Doctrine: British Policy in Greece, 1944-47*, Oxford, 1982; Papastratis, P., *British Policy towards Greece during the Second World War, 1941-44*, London, 1984; Richter, H., *British Intervention in Greece: From Varkiza to Civil War, February 1945 to August 1946*, London, 1986; Woodhouse, C.M., *The Struggle for Greece, 1941-49*, London 1976; Woodhouse, C.M., *Apple of Discord: A Survey of Recent Greek Politics in their International Setting*, London, 1948; Xydis, S., *Greece and the Great Powers, 1944-47: Prelude to the 'Truman Doctrine'*, Thessaloniki, 1963.

<sup>5</sup>. FO 371/73180/Z2464/317/22, 22-3-1948, confidential, telegram, no. 304, Ashley-Clarke to FO, 22-3-1948; FO 371/73181/Z2755/317/22, 1-4-1948, telegram, no. 360, Harvey to Bevin, 1-4-1948; confidential, telegram, no. 1078, Bevin to Harvey, 10-4-1948; *ibid.*, Z4113/317/22, 17-5-1948, letter, French Embassy in London to FO, 14-5-1948; *ibid.*, Z3535/317/22, 27-4-1948, letter, Mallet to Sforza, 16-4-1948.

different attitudes in how the Cold War should be conducted.<sup>6</sup>

The onset of the Cold War transformed Italy into a major prize. Since, to all intents and purposes, postwar Italy had been strongly identified with the West, the British and the Americans came to view the consolidation and embedding of Italy in the Western bloc as being inextricably linked with the survival of the whole anti-communist postwar order. Both powers did their utmost to ensure that Italy did not go communist either through internal subversion or through the ballot box. The monumental and hitherto, unprecedented, intervention of the Truman Administration serves only to obscure the substantial and critical involvement of the British government in the reconstruction of Italy in the latter part of the 1940s.<sup>7</sup>

The fear of communism and especially the fear of the PCI which had been an integral part of every Italian government since 1944 was evident in all aspects

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<sup>6</sup>. Barker, E., *The British between the Superpowers, 1945-50*, London, 1983; Edmonds, R., *Setting the Mould: The United States and Britain, 1945-50*, Oxford, 1986; Rothwell, V. H., *Britain and the Cold War, 1941-47*, London, 1982; Kent, J., *Britain's Imperial Strategy and the Origins of the Cold War, 1944-45*, Leicester, 1993; Young, J.W., *Britain France and the Unity of Europe, 1945-51*, Leicester, 1984.

<sup>7</sup>. Miller, J.E., 'Taking Off the Gloves: The United States and the Italian Election of 1948', *Diplomatic History*, no. 7, Winter, 1983; Pisani, S., *The CIA and the Marshall Plan*, Edinburgh, 1991; Hughes, H. S., *The United States and Italy*, Cambridge, Mass., 1979; Smith, E.T., *The United States, Italy and NATO, 1947-52*, London, 1991.

of British policy towards Italy during 1946-1949.<sup>8</sup> Britain took all the measures it could to frustrate the ambitions of the PCI. The British decision to continue its involvement in the Italian armed and police forces in this period was directly related to these concerns as well as promoting British interests. The Italian armed and police forces had been re-organized, equipped, trained and standardized on British lines right up to the time Italy joined NATO. The fact that Italy, in 1948, decided not to accept further British plans for its forces ought not to obscure the tremendous contribution of Britain in moulding the Italian forces and the continued training provided after this period.<sup>9</sup>

Britain's low key but breathtaking involvement in the Italian General Election of 1948 was very important not only for the victory of the anti-communist ticket but also for the maintenance of a united front within the Western camp. Britain used its influence with France to bring it on board and contribute to all

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<sup>8</sup>. FO 371/43335/N2409/183/38, 21-4-1944, minute by Skaife, 5-4-1944; *ibid.*, N2883/183/38, 12-5-1944, top secret, PHP(43)1(O), Post-Hostilities Planning Committee, Revised Draft, 24-4-1944; FO 371/56831/N3742/605/38, 21-3-1946, top secret, telegram, no. 1090, Franks to FO, 21-3-1946; PREM 8/515, top secret, COS(46)43(O), 13-2-46; CAB 131/1, top secret, DO(46)5, 15-2-1946; *ibid.*, top secret, DO(46) 8, 18-3-1946; Arcidiacono, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-266; Ross, 'Foreign Office Attitudes to the Soviet Union, 1941-45', pp. 521-40; Ellwood, 'Al tramonto dell' impero britannico', 73-92; Rothwell, pp. 74-290, *passim*; Watt, 'Britain the United States and the Opening of the Cold War', pp. 50-5 and 57-9; Watt, 'British Military Perceptions of the Soviet Union as a Strategic Threat, 1945-50', pp. 328-335; Woodward, *op. cit.*, 471-91; Adamthwaite, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Kent, 'British Policy', pp. 139-52.

<sup>9</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM187/187/22, 12-1-1946, telegram, no. 566, FO to Rome, 14-12-1946; *ibid.*, ZM1178/187/22, 10-4-1946, minute by Ross, 8-4-1946; letter, COS to JSM, 17-4-1946; FO 371/60602/1227/89/22, 15-4-1946, minutes by Harvey and Ross, 16-4-1946; letter, Carandini to Harvey, 16-4-1946; FO 371/60603/ZM2643/89/22, 30-7-1946, secret, letter, Hoyer-Millar, to Sudgen, 30-7-1946; FO 371/60602/ZM1584/89/22, 13-5-1946, top secret, telegram, FAN 1135, SACMED to British Chiefs of Staff, 7-5-1946; letter, Ross to WO, 21-5-1946; FO 371/49890/ZM6285/243/22, 29-12-1945, minutes by Hood, 4-1-1946 and Ross, 8-1-1946; top secret, telegram, NAF 1103, SACMED to CCS, 21-12-1945; letter, FO to WO, 10-1-1946; AIR 23/6343, top secret, P/319 (1st Draft), 'Italian Navy and Air Force', AFHQ, 2-12-1945; top secret, P/319 (Final) (Revised), 'Italian Air Force', 15-12-1945; WO 204/3805, secret, letter, MoD to SACMED, 13-2-1946; Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 192; FO 371/73174/Z3972/274/22, 11-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 153, Mallet to Bevin, 4-5-1948.

interventionist schemes and had soothed ruffled French sensibilities caused by American heavy-handedness.<sup>10</sup> This kept Allied unity intact and diffused potential squabbles that could have been exploited by the Soviet Union. The British Labour government supported Saragat and Lombardo after they walked away from *Palazzo Barberini* and used its influence to make sure that their decision to do so did not condemn them to the political wilderness.<sup>11</sup> Such support guaranteed that, at least, some potentially reformist spirit was implanted in De Gasperi's government. Britain also paved the way for the Trieste Declaration by using the UN as a forum to show that the Treaty provisions governing the Free Territory were not advantageous to the West nor Italy.<sup>12</sup> It also attempted to associate Italy with its own plans for promoting European co-operation under a British led Western Union, initially, and within

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<sup>10</sup>. FO 371/72486/R3508/44/70, 18-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 264, Harvey to FO, 17-3-1948; *ibid.*, R3576/44/70, 19-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 274, Harvey to FO, 18-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 3114, FO to Washington, 18-3-1948, *ibid.*, R3723/44/70, 22-3-1948, minute by Kirkpatrick, 18-3-1948; FO 371/72486/R3712/44/70, 22-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 387, Bevin to Oliver Harvey, 17-3-1948; FO 371/73055/Z2559/273/72, 24-3-1948, minute by Roberts, 18-3-1948; FO 371/73173/Z1764/247/22, 2-3-1948, top secret, telegram, no. 982, Inverchapel to FO, 1-3-1948.

<sup>11</sup>. Bullock, *op. cit.*, pp. 543-5; Varsori, A., 'La Gran Bretagna e le elezioni politiche italiane del 18 aprile 1948', pp. 5-71, *passim*; Sebastiani, *op. cit.*, *passim*; FO 1110/1/PR24/9/3, 2-3-1948, secret, despatch, no. 81, Mallet to Bevin, 24-2-1948; secret, letter, Warner to Mallet, 25-3-1948; *ibid.*, P138/138/3, 23-2-1948, secret, telegram, no. 489, Warner to Mallet, 2-3-1948; top secret, letter, Warner to Mallet, 24-2-1948; *ibid.*, PR25/9/3, 2-3-1948, minute by Talbot, 3-3-1948; FO 1110/5/PR196/1/9/3, 13-4-1948, confidential, letter, Warner to Balfour, 12-4-1948; secret, Annex, 12-4-1948; FO 371/73162/Z5054/93/22, 22-6-1948, report by Healey, 4 to 7 June 1948; minute by Carlyle, 7-7-1948; *ibid.*, Z5187/93/22, 25-6-1948, restricted, telegram, no. 1065, Rome to FO, 25-6-1948; telegram, no. 1472, FO to Rome, 25-6-1948.

<sup>12</sup>. FO 371/67344/R14290/10/92, 27-10-1947, top secret, telegram, no. 11314, FO to Washington, 31-10-1947; *ibid.*, R14290/10/92, 27-10-1947, top secret, minutes by Bevin, undated, Warner, 24-10-1947, Wallinger, 16-10-1947 and Sargent, 21-10-1947 FO 371/72484/R1474/44/70, 3-2-1948, minute by Warner, 8-1-1948; *ibid.*, R139/44/70, 1-1-1948, minute by Sargent, 1-1-1948; *ibid.*, R506/44/70, 12-1-1948, top secret, memorandum, 2-1-1948; FO 371/72483/R710/44/70, 16-1-1948, secret, telegram, no. 631, FO to Washington, 17-1-1948; FO 371/72483/1398/44/70, 31-1-1948, secret, telegram, no. 433, Bevin to Cadogan, 31-1-1948.

the Council of Europe later.<sup>13</sup>

Although Britain was not prepared to acquiesce to a total eclipse of its influence in the region, it never saw Italy as a test case which would manifest its 'ability to continue to be a first rank power'.<sup>14</sup> America's economic might and its increased interest in the affairs of Italy made it obvious that Britain could not compete with it in the economic reconstruction stakes nor did Britain wish to, because of the onerous financial burdens such commitment would carry. Thus, Italy necessitated that Britain undertake a fine balancing act, on the one hand, having to adopt tactics and policies that perpetuated its influence and on the other, cultivating American interest and involvement in order to lessen the financial drain on its resources.<sup>15</sup> Britain sought the maintenance of influence not the monopoly of power in its relations with Italy in 1946-49. In fact, Britain did not seek to exercise the direct power of the United States nor did it attempt to compete with it. On the contrary, it encouraged American involvement in Italy as a means of bolstering its own position.<sup>16</sup> The willingness of the Americans to go over British heads in implementing their ideas upset the British government because of the implications for Anglo-Italian relations and because

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<sup>13</sup>. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, Fifth Series, Vol. 446, Cols. 387-409, 1947-48, London, 1948; CAB 129/25, CM(48)72, top secret, memorandum by Bevin, 3-3-1948; FO 371/73155/Z643/93/22, 26-1-1948, telegram, no. 145, Mallet to Bevin, 24-1-1948; FO 371/73191/Z637/637/22, 26-1-1948, minute by Roberts, record of discussion between Bevin and Gallarati-Scotti, 24-1-1948; CAB 128/13, CM78(48), 6-12-1948.

<sup>14</sup>. Gat, op. cit, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>. FO 371/60622/ZM315/187/22, 24-2-1946, telegram, no. 1350, FO to Washington, 11-2-1946; record of a meeting among Home Office, Foreign Office and War Office officials, on the proposed police mission to Italy, 5-2-1946; *ibid.*, ZM619/187/22, 21-2-1946, aide memoir for Bevin: 'Police Mission', 20-2-1946; FO 371/60622/ZM592/187/22, 1-3-1946, ORC, 30-8-1945; *ibid.*, ZM212/187/22, 14-1-1946, letter, Ross to Beighton, Treasury, 21-1-1946; *ibid.*, ZM1729/187/22, 23-5-1946, minutes by Sargent and Ross, 15-6-1946.

<sup>16</sup>. CAB 128/14, CM(48)19 Conclusions, confidential, Annex, 5-3-1948.

such actions undermined the foundation of a partnership with America in international affairs which Britain was trying to forge whilst regaining its strength.<sup>17</sup>

British policy towards Italy was inspired by two distinct and yet interrelated objectives: first, to refuse Italy to the Soviets and the PCI and second, to safeguard its interests in the region by a limited retrenchment that would assist Britain to spring back financially and recover its position as a major power alongside the United States and the USSR. What Britain had set out to do in 1945 and achieved was that during the period in which it was weighing its options and was feeling its way in the new postwar world, access to Italy was not denied to it. It is clear that the Attlee government had achieved the transition from the punitive policy of Churchill's Wartime National government to a constructive policy towards Italy from early on. The Labour government's policy towards Italy showed a degree of flexibility in its implementation so that the ultimate aim, namely, that of Italian political stability was never put in jeopardy.<sup>18</sup> The only area in which Britain showed consistent rigidity was in its policy towards Italian inclusion into NATO. British opposition was not based on an inability to consider Italy as anything other than an 'ex-enemy'<sup>19</sup> but on the perception of NATO as being primarily a military organization rather than a

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<sup>17</sup>. FRUS, 1945, Vol. IV, p. 1050-9; FRUS, 1946, Vol. III, pp. 867-79; FRUS, 1946, Vol. V, p. 950; FO 371/67791/Z599/135/22, 17-1-1947, minute by Ross, 20-1-1947; *ibid.*, Z1967/135/22, 24-2-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1702, FO to Washington, 22-2-1947; *ibid.*, Z2238/135/22, 3-3-1947, confidential, telegram, no. 1308, Washington to FO, 1-3-1947; Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-2, 203, 215 and 230.

<sup>18</sup>. FO 371/73234/Z9515/9515/22, 22-11-1948, secret, despatch, no. 380, Mallet to McNeil, 16-11-1948; FO 371/73172/9649/167/22, secret, despatch, no. 382, Mallet to McNeil, 9-11-1948; *ibid.*, Z2011/167/22, 22-3-1948, minute by Pemberton-Pigott, 17-3-1948; *ibid.*, Z4162/167/22, 18-5-1948, minute by Brown, 28-5-1948, confidential, despatch, no. 157, Mallet to Bevin, 12-5-1948.

<sup>19</sup>. Gat, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

political one and its desire to keep the new organization's geographical competence specific so that the other regional security schemes that Britain wished to create could still go ahead.<sup>20</sup>

Ultimately the question of how successful British policy towards Italy was has to be addressed. Set against its own criteria Britain's policy was a qualified success. Absolute success would have needed a different international environment than the one in which Britain operated in the late 1940s. The emergence of the Cold War had jolted the United States from the comparative luxury of isolationism. The interventionist policies of the Truman administration, America's economic power and the potency of the Soviet threat left little scope for British plans to flourish fully, as the failure of the 'Western Union' policy revealed. American power had saturated the Western world and by 1949 the United States had emerged as the undisputed leader of the Western world. The influx of American power into the Central, Eastern and Northern shores of the Mediterranean was so complete that it was almost cataclysmic. No matter what policy Britain had chosen to follow in the preceding period, American power left no room for Britain to play a significant role in Italian affairs from 1949 onwards. This should not diminish, however, Labour Britain's contribution from 1946 to 1949 to the establishment of a pro-Western Italy.

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<sup>20</sup>. CAB 128/13, CM68(48), 4-11-1948; CAB 129/30, top secret, CP(48)249, 2-11-1949; CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)20, 23-2-1948; CAB 128/12, confidential, Annex, CM19(48)19th meeting, 5-3-1949; CAB 131/6, top secret, DO(48)64, memorandum by Bevin, 20-9-48.

### **Glossary of Abbreviations**

ACC	Allied Control Commission
ACS	<i>Archivio Centrale dello Stato</i>
ACLI	Association of Catholic Italian Workers
AFHQ	Allied Forces Headquarters
AFL	American Federation of Labour
ALCOM	Allied Commission
AMG	Allied Military Government
APW	Armistice and Postwar Committee
ASMAE	<i>Archivio storico e diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri</i>
BoT	Board of Trade
BTO	Brussels Treaty Organization
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CEEC	Committee of European Economic Co-operation
CFM	Council of Foreign Ministers
CGIL	<i>Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro</i>
CHQ.CMF	Central Headquarters, Central Mediterranean Forces
CIA	Central Intelligence Service
CISL	<i>Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Liberi</i>
CO	Colonial Office
COMISCO	Committee of International Socialist Conference
COS	Chiefs of Staff Committee
DC	<i>Democrazia Cristiana</i> , Christian Democracy
DBPO	Documents on British Policy Overseas
DJAG	Deputy Judge Advocate General's Office



DPs	Displaced Persons
ECA	European Co-operation Administration
ERP	European Recovery Programme
FAN	Communications indicator for messages from CCS to SACMED
FO	Foreign Office
FORD	Research Department of the Foreign Office
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
FX	Military communications indicator
GNP	Gross National Product
IPD	Information Policy Department
IRD	Information Research Department
JAG	Judge Advocate General
JIC	Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee
JSM	Joint Staff Mission
MMIA	Military Mission to the Italian Army
NAF	Communications indicator for messages from SACMED to CCS
NAP	North Atlantic Pact
NARA	National Archive and Records Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
OEEC	Organization of European Economic Co-operation
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PCI	<i>Partito Comunista Italiano</i>
PLP	Parliamentary Labour Party
PRO	Public Record Office
PSDI	<i>Partito Social-Democratico Italiano</i>

PSI	<i>Partito Socialista Italiano</i>
PSIUP	<i>Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria</i> , Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity, the full name of the PSI
RESMED	Resident Minister, Mediterranean Theatre
RG	Record Group
SACMED	Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre
SE-WMRPG	Southern Eastern Western Mediterranean Regional Planning Group
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters of Allied Expeditionary Force
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UIL	<i>Unione Italiana Lavoratori</i> , Union of Italian Workers
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	Security Council of the United Nations
UNWCC	United Nations War Crimes Commission
WCS	War Crimes Section
WEG	Western European Group
WEID	Western European Information Department
WMRPG	Western Mediterranean Regional Planning Group
WO	War Office

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CAB 65	Cabinet Office: War Cabinet: Minutes
CAB 66	Cabinet Office: War Cabinet: Memoranda
CAB 79	Cabinet Office: War Cabinet: Chiefs of Staff: Minutes
CAB 80	Cabinet Office: War Cabinet: Chiefs of Staff: Memoranda
CAB 123	Cabinet Office: Armistice and Postwar Committee
CAB 128	Cabinet Office: Cabinet Minutes and Memoranda
CAB 129	Cabinet Office: Cabinet Memoranda
CAB 131	Cabinet Office: Defence Committee: Minutes and Memoranda
CAB 134	Cabinet Office: Overseas Negotiations Committee
DEFE 4	Ministry of Defence: Chiefs of Staff: Minutes
DEFE 5	Ministry of Defence: Chiefs of Staff: Memoranda
DEFE 6	Ministry of Defence: Chiefs of Staff: Joint Planning Staff
FO 371	Foreign Office: General Correspondence Series, Political
FO 800	Foreign Office: Private Collections: Ernest Bevin's Papers
FO 953	Foreign Office: Information Policy Department
FO 1110	Foreign Office: Information Research Department
PREM 8	Prime Minister's Office: C. R. Attlee's Papers
WO 32	War Office: Registered Files: General Series
WO 204	War Office: War of 1939-45: AFHQ Papers
WO 310	War Office: Judge Advocate General: War Crimes Group

WO 311      War Office: Judge Advocate General: War Crimes Group

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