

Genesis of the Secret Treaty of London

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Genesis of the Secret Treaty of London

By GORDON GORDON-SMITH

[CAPTAIN OF THE ROYAL SERBIAN ARMY AND ATTACHE OF THE SERBIAN LEGATION AT WASHINGTON]

THE factor in post-bellum politics which has done most to threaten the good understanding of the Allies has been the situation created by the secret treaty of London entered into by Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy on April 26, 1915. This document has been referred to in the harshest terms by many students of international politics. It has been characterized as "infamous" and "iniquitous" by men of "light and leading" in the world's affairs. It is, therefore, of interest to study the genesis of this much-discussed document and see if an explanation, if not a justification, can be found for the act of four statesmen of the eminence of Viscount Grey, M. Paul Cambon, the Marchese Imperiali, and Count Benckendorff in signing a document of which all right-thinking men are today heartily ashamed.

The excuses for it on the part of two of them, Viscount Grey and M. Cambon, were ignorance and dire necessity. In the case of the Marchese Imperiali there was no ignorance, (no one knew the scope and extent of the advantages for Italy contained in the treaty better than the Italian Cabinet whose mandatary he was,) but there was, in 1915, a comprehension of Italian interests which explains, if it does not excuse, the drawing up of what is now seen to be an iniquitous pact and one which Great Britain and France would today be only too glad to repudiate if they could do so without breach of their plighted word. In the case of the Russian plenipotentiary there was, perhaps, less ignorance of the interests at stake, but there was undoubtedly the same constraint of dire necessity which forced the hands of his British and French colleagues.

The principal rôle in the negotiation and conclusion of the secret treaty was that played by Italy. At the moment of the outbreak of the world war Italy was

still a member of the Triple Alliance. The Consulta, however, did not regard the cause of the conflict put forward by the Central Powers as a *casus foederis* provided for in Italy's treaty with them. The Italian Government, therefore, informed its German and Austrian allies that it intended to remain neutral during the conflict. This the Rome Cabinet declared to both groups of belligerents, but without furnishing either with any absolute guarantee as to how long and under what circumstances this neutrality would be maintained.

BOTH SIDES COURTED ITALY

This uncertainty was a cause of deep anxiety and embarrassment, both to the Central Powers and to the Powers of the Entente. Their anxiety was further increased by the fact that there were in Italy two powerful parties, (minorities, it is true, but such as had to be reckoned with)—the pro-German party under Signor Giolitti, and the war party headed by the Independent Socialists under Signor Mussolini and the advanced wing of the Liberal Party, which were each trying to influence the policy of the Government in favor of its views.

As a consequence it became almost a matter of life or death for each of the belligerent groups to get Italy to "come off the fence" for good and come down on its side of the barricade.

Germany knew that it was hopeless to expect Italy to take up arms on the side of the Central Powers. But she hoped to obtain from her a cast-iron treaty of neutrality such as would relieve the Wilhelmstrasse and Ballplatz of all anxiety and allow them to shape their policies with the Italian danger eliminated. Prince Bülow, the German Ambassador to the Quirinal, therefore commenced a series of negotiations with this object in view. Then began an era of sordid huckstering which forms one of the most unlovely episodes of the recent

world conflict. The negotiations between Berlin and Rome were carried on for weeks. They were the more long-drawn-out as it became increasingly difficult for Prince Bülow to get the Vienna Government to entertain the proposals of the Rome Cabinet. Finally, however, in April, 1915, the Wilhelmstrasse and the Consulta reached an agreement, and the terms on which Italy agreed to guarantee her neutrality to the Central Powers were committed to paper by Baron Sonnino, and on April 8 were formally submitted to the Central Powers.

WHAT GERMANY OFFERED

This document ran as follows:

ARTICLE 1.—Austria-Hungary cedes the Trentino to Italy, with the frontiers which the Kingdom of Italy had in 1811, that is to say, after the Treaty of Paris of Feb. 28, 1810.

Note to Article 1.—The new frontier separates itself from the present frontier at Mount Cevedale: it follows for an instant the rising ground between Val Venosta and Val de Noce, then descends on the Adige to Gargazzone, between Meran and Botzen, follows the plateau on the left bank, cuts the Sarentina Valley in halves from the Isarco to the Chiusa, and re-joins the present frontier by the Dolomite territory of the right bank of the Avisio, not including the Gardona and Badia Valleys, but including the Ampezzan Valley.

ARTICLE 2.—A revision, in favor of Italy, will be made of her eastern frontier, by including in the territory ceded the towns of Gradisca and Gorizia. The new frontier separates from the present one at Troghofel, running toward the east to Osternig, whence it descends the Carnic Alps, to Saifniz. Then, by the rising ground between Seisera and Schliza, it remounts to the Wirsehberg, then again follows the present frontier to the Nevea Pass, and then descends the sides of the Rombone to Isonzo, passing to the east of Plazzo. It then follows the line of the Isonzo to Tolmino, where it leaves the Isonzo to follow a line more to the east, a line passing to the east of the Pregona-Planina plateau and following the hollow of the Chiappovano, descends to the east of Goritzia, and, across the Carso de Comen, runs to the sea between Monfalcone and Trieste, near Nalresina.

ARTICLE 3.—The town of Trieste, with its territory, which will be extended to the north to Nalresina (inclusive) so as to touch the new Italian frontier, (Art. 2,) and to the south in such a way as to include the present judiciary districts of Capo d'Istria and Pirano, will be constituted as an autonomous and independent State, as far as concerns international,

military, legislative, financial, and administrative affairs, Austria-Hungary renouncing all sovereignty over it. It shall remain a free port. Neither Austro-Hungarian nor Italian militia shall enter it. It will take over its quota of the Austrian public debt, in proportion to its population.

ARTICLE 4.—Austria-Hungary cedes to Italy the group of the Curscia Islands, including Lissa (with the adjacent islets of S. Andrea and Busi) and Lesina, (with the Spalmadores and the Torcola,) Curzola, Lagosta, (with the adjacent islets and reefs,) Cazza, and Meleda, and, in addition, Pelagosa.

ARTICLE 5.—Italy will occupy the ceded territories (Arts. 1, 2, and 4) immediately. Trieste and its territories will be immediately evacuated by the Austro-Hungarian authorities and militia. All the soldiers and sailors from the towns and territories serving in the Austro-Hungarian Army will be at once mustered out.

ARTICLE 6.—Austria-Hungary recognizes the full sovereignty of Italy over the town and Bay of Valona, including Sasseno, with, in the hinterland, the part of territory necessary to their defense.

ARTICLE 7.—Austria-Hungary will cease completely to take any interest in Albania, comprised within the limits assigned to it by the conference of London.

ARTICLE 8.—Austria-Hungary will grant a complete amnesty and will immediately liberate all persons sentenced for military or political offenses, who belong to the territory ceded (Arts. 1, 2, and 4) or evacuated, (Art. 3.)

ARTICLE 9.—Italy, for the liberation of the territories ceded, (Arts. 1, 2, and 4,) of the quota of the Austrian or Austro-Hungarian public debt and for the pensions payable to former imperial and royal functionaries and in exchange for the complete and immediate transfer to the Kingdom of Italy of all real and movable property, excepting arms, on the territories and in compensation for all the rights of the State on the said territories, for the present and the future, without any exception, will pay to Austria-Hungary a capital sum of 200,000,000 Italian lire in gold.

ARTICLE 10.—Italy undertakes to observe complete neutrality during the present war as far as Austria-Hungary and Germany are concerned.

ARTICLE 11.—During the whole duration of the present war, Italy renounces her right to invoke later in her favor the dispositions contained in Article 8 of the treaty of the Triple Alliance, and Austria-Hungary makes the same renunciation for the Italian occupation of the Dodecanesus.

(Signed)

SONNINO.



MAP SHOWING CHIEF POINTS ON THE ADRIATIC EAST COAST CLAIMED BY BOTH ITALY AND THE SERB-CROAT-SLOVENE STATE, INCLUDING FIUME AND VARIOUS ISLANDS NAMED IN THE TREATY OF LONDON

AUSTRIA'S OBJECTION

Prince Bülow and his Government thought that they would be able to bring such pressure to bear on their Austrian ally that the Vienna Government would agree to these terms. But there was one point on which the Ballplatz remained adamant, and that was the immediate carrying out of the terms asked by Italy. Austria was willing to subscribe to them, but on condition that their execution be postponed till after the war. The point on which the long and painful negotiations met shipwreck was Italy's demand for the *immediate* military occupation of the territory ceded to her and the *immediate* evacuation by Austrian troops of the territory to be erected into the autonomous and independent State of Trieste.

To this the Vienna Government absolutely refused to consent, while Baron Sonnino, on his side, declared it was a

conditio sine qua non of Italy's signature of a treaty of neutrality. All further negotiations were therefore broken off.

This was the opportunity of the Entente Powers. London, Paris, and Petrograd approached the Consulta and asked what it would demand as the price of coming into the war on the side of the Entente. In view of the offer Italy had just turned down it was clear that the price would be high. The Entente statesmen were, however, not a little horrified when the Rome Government disclosed its conditions in all their nakedness. But the situation of the Allies was such that they were forced to pay almost any price to assure themselves of Italian support. As long as Italy was "on the fence" France had to keep at least 500,000 men to guard her southern frontier, and this at a moment when every soldier was worth his weight in gold.

As the Entente Powers regarded it as

a life-and-death matter to get Italy into the war on their side, they signed on April 26, 1915, the following secret treaty:*

The Marquis Imperiali, acting on the instructions of his [the Italian] Government, has the honor to communicate the following memorandum to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey; the Ambassador of France, M. Cambon, and the Ambassador of Russia, Count Benckendorff:

ARTICLE 1.—A military convention is to be concluded without delay between the General Staffs of France, Great Britain, Russia, and Italy to determine the minimum number of troops which Russia would have to throw against Austria-Hungary if the latter should want to concentrate all her forces against Italy. Russia should decide mainly to attack Germany. Similarly the said convention is to regulate the questions relating to armistices, in so far as such armistices form an essential part of the competence of the Supreme Army Command.

ARTICLE 2.—On her part Italy undertakes by all means at her disposal to conduct the campaign in union with France, Great Britain, and Russia against all the powers at war with them.

ARTICLE 3.—The naval forces of France and Great Britain are to render uninterrupted and active assistance to Italy until such time as the navy of Austria has been destroyed or peace has been concluded. A naval convention is to be concluded without delay between France, Great Britain, and Italy.

ARTICLE 4.—By the future treaty of peace, Italy is to receive the district of Trentino; the entire Southern Tyrol up to its natural geographical frontier, which is the Brenner Pass; the city and district of Trieste; the County of Gorizia and Gradisca; the entire Istria up to the Quarnero, including Voloscoe and the Istrien islands of Cherso and Lussina, as well as the smaller Islands of Plavinika, Unia, Canidoli, Palazzuoli, S. Petro del Nembi, Asinello, and Gruica, with the neighboring islets.

Note 1.—Here follow the details of the frontier delimitations: In execution of the conditions of Article 4 the frontier line should run as follows: From the summit of the Umbrile northward as far as Stelvio, thence along the watershed of the Rhetian Alps as far as the sources of the Adige and the Eisach; after which it will cross the heights of the Reschon and the Brenner and those of the Eitz and the Tiller. The frontier will then turn southward, passing round Mount Tobloch in order to reach the real frontier of Carniola, which is near to the Alps. Passing

along this frontier, the line will reach Mount Tarvis and follow the watershed of the Julian Alps beyond the crests of the Predil, the Mangart, and the Tricorne, (Triglav,) and the defiles of Podberdo, Poldansko, and Idria. Thence it will turn in a southeasterly direction toward the Schneeberg, in such a way as to exclude the basin of the Save and its tributaries from Italian territory. From the Schneeberg the frontier will descend toward the seacoast—Castua, Matuglia, and Volosca being considered as Italian districts.

ARTICLE 5.—Italy will likewise receive the Province of Dalmatia in its present frontiers, including Lissierica and Trebigne, (Trebanje,) in the north, and all the country in the south up to a line drawn from the coast, at the promontory of Planka, eastward along the watershed in such a way as to include in the Italian possessions all the valleys of the rivers flowing into the Sebenico—viz., Cikola, Kerka, and Buotinsnica—with all their affluents. Italy will likewise obtain all the islands situated to the north and west of the coasts of Dalmatia, beginning with Premuda, Selve, Ulbo, Skerda, Maob Pago, and Puntadura, and further north, and down to Melada in the south, with the inclusion of the Islands of St. Andrea, Busi, Lissa, Lesina, Torcola, Curzola, Cazza, and Lagosta, with all the adjacent rocks and islets, as well as Pelagosa, but without the Islands of Zirona Grande and Zirona Piccola, Bua, Solta, and Brazza.

The following are to be neutralized: (1) the entire coasts from Planka, in the north, to the southern extremity of the Sabbioncello peninsula, including this last-named peninsula in its entirety; (2) the part of the littoral from a point ten versts south of the promontory of Ragusa Vecchia to the Viosa (Vojuzza) River, so as to include in the neutralized zone the entire Gulf of Cattaro, with its ports of Antivari, Dulcigno, San Giovanni di Medua, and Durazzo; the rights of Montenegro, arising from the declarations exchanged by the two contracting parties as far back as April and May, 1909, remaining intact. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that those rights were guaranteed to Montenegro within her present frontiers, they are not to be extended to those territories and ports which may eventually be given to Montenegro. Thus, none of the ports of the littoral now belonging to Montenegro is to be neutralized at any future time. On the other hand, the disqualifications affecting Antivari, to which Montenegro herself agreed in 1909, are to remain in force; (3) lastly, all the islands which are not annexed to Italy.

Note 2.—The following territories on the Adriatic will be included by the powers of the Quadruple Entente in Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro: In the north of the Adriatic, the entire coast from Volosca Bay, on the border of Istria, to the northern frontier of Dalmatia, including the entire coast now belonging to Hungary,

*This treaty was published in *CURRENT HISTORY*, March, 1918, soon after the Bolshevik Government at Petrograd had made it public; but it is given again here to complete the author's statement.—EDITOR.

and the entire coast of Croatia, the port of Fiume, and the small ports of Novi and Carlopago, and also the Islands of Veglia, Pervicchio, Gregorio, Cobi, and Arbe; and in the south of the Adriatic, where Serbia and Montenegro have interests, the entire coast from Flanka up to the River Drin, with the chief ports of Spalato, Ragusa, Cattaro, Antivari, Dulcigno, and San Giovanni di Medua, with the Islands of Zirona Grande, Zirona Piccola, Bua, Solta, Brazza, Jakljan, and Calamotta.

The port of Durazzo may be given to the independent Mohammedan State of Albania.

ARTICLE 6.—Italy will receive in absolute property Valona, the Islands of Saseno, and as much territory as would be required to secure their military safety—approximately between the River Vozizza in the north and in the east down to the borders of the Chimara district in the south.

ARTICLE 7.—Italy, having received Trentino and Istria in accordance with Article 4, and Dalmatia and the Adriatic islands in accordance with Article 5, and the Gulf of Valona, is not, in case of the creation of a small autonomous and neutralized State in Albania, to resist the possible desire of France, Great Britain, and Russia to distribute among Montenegro, Serbia, and Greece the northern and southern parts of Albania. The latter's southern littoral from the frontier of the Italian district of Valona to Capo Stylos is to be neutralized. Italy is to have the right to conduct foreign relations with Albania; at any rate, Italy is to agree to the inclusion in Albania of a territory large enough to allow her frontiers to touch those of Greece and Serbia, west of Ochrida Lake.

ARTICLE 8.—Italy will obtain all the twelve islands (Dodecanese) now occupied by her, in full possession.

ARTICLE 9.—France, Great Britain, and Russia admit in principle the fact of Italy's interest in the maintenance of the political balance of power in the Mediterranean, and her rights, in case of a partition of Turkey, to a share, equal to theirs, in the basin of the Mediterranean—viz., in that part of it which adjoins the Province of Adalia, in which Italy has already acquired special rights and interests defined in the Italo-British Convention. The zone which is to be made Italy's property is to be more precisely defined in due course in conformity with the vital interests of France and Great Britain. Italy's interests will likewise be taken into consideration in case the powers should also maintain territorial integrity of Asiatic Turkey for some future period of time, and if they should only proceed to establish among themselves spheres of influence. In case France, Great Britain, and Russia should, in the course of the present war, occupy any districts of Asiatic Turkey, the entire territory adjacent to Adalia and defined

more precisely below (?) is to be left to Italy, who reserves her right to occupy it.

ARTICLE 10.—In Libya, Italy is to enjoy all those rights and privileges which now belong to the Sultan in virtue of the Treaty of Lausanne.

ARTICLE 11.—Italy is to get a share in the war indemnity corresponding to the magnitude of her sacrifices and efforts.

ARTICLE 12.—Italy adheres to the declaration made by France, England, and Russia about leaving Arabia and the holy Moslem places in the hands of an independent Moslem power.

ARTICLE 13.—Should France and Great Britain extend their colonial possessions in Africa at the expense of Germany, they will admit in principle Italy's right to demand certain compensation by way of an extension of her possessions in Erythraea, Somaliland, and Libya, and the colonial areas adjoining French and British colonies.

ARTICLE 14.—Great Britain undertakes to facilitate for Italy the immediate flotation on the London market of a loan on advantageous terms to the amount of not less than £50,000,000.

ARTICLE 15.—France, Great Britain, and Russia pledge themselves to support Italy in not allowing the representatives of the Holy See to undertake any diplomatic steps having for their object the conclusion of peace or the settlement of questions connected with the present war.

ARTICLE 16.—The present treaty is to be kept secret. As regards Italy's adhesion to the Declaration of Sept. 5, 1915, this declaration alone will be published immediately on the declaration of war by or against Italy.

Having taken into consideration the present memorandum, the representatives of France, Great Britain, and Russia, being authorized thereto, agreed with the representatives of Italy, likewise authorized thereto, as follows:

France, Great Britain, and Russia express their complete agreement with the present memorandum submitted to them by the Italian Government. In respect of Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the present memorandum, regarding the co-ordination of the military and naval operations of all the four powers, Italy declares that she will actively intervene at an earliest possible date, and, at any rate, not later than one month after the signature of the present document by the contracting parties.

The undersigned have confirmed by hand and seal the present instrument in London in four copies. April 26, 1915.

(Signed) GREY,
CAMBON,
IMPERIALI,
BENCKENDORFF.

In the light of subsequent events this treaty seems a flagrant betrayal of one

of the bravest and most loyal allies of the Entente, the Kingdom of Serbia. The carrying out of the secret treaty would indeed have been a terrible blow to the aspirations of Serbia and the Southern Slavs for unity, as, by its terms, nearly a million of them would, without their consent being asked, have been transferred from the yoke of Austria to that of Italy.

What arguments can be advanced in palliation of this apparent betrayal? As concerns Great Britain and France the chief cause was probably, as I have stated above, ignorance and dire necessity. The world war had opened up so many and such vast problems that the statesmen of the Entente were not able to grasp them all. One of these was the aspiration for unity on the part of the various sections of the Serbo-Croatian race, that is to say, Serbia, Montenegro, and the Serb-Croat-Slovene Provinces of the Austrian Empire, (Bosnia, Herzegovina, Istria, Dalmatia, Slavonia, Carniola, Croatia, the Banat, and the Batchka.)

Of all the international questions raised by the war the Yugoslav one was probably the furthest removed from the beaten tracks followed by European statesmen. The Polish question, *Italia Irredenta*, the Danish duchies, the future of Constantinople, and similar problems were more or less familiar and within the range of practical politics. But the study of the Yugoslav question had been confined to a few experts like Dr. Seton-Watson, Mr. Wickham Steed, and Sir Arthur Evans in England, and Professor Denis, M. André Choradame, and M. August Gauvin in France. But they were experts, and it is notorious that during the recent world conflict the men in power showed a curious disregard of expert advice and preferred to follow rule-of-thumb methods imposed on them from day to day by the march of events.

OLD IDEALS STILL PREVAILED

Another point which contributed to their shortsighted policy was their curious skepticism as to the ultimate and complete break-up of the Austrian Empire. The statesmen in Vienna had balanced successfully on the tight rope

for so long that they were credited with being able to continue the performance indefinitely. The idea that the Poles, the Czechoslovaks, the Rumanians, the Italians, and the Southern Slavs could break away completely from the Austrian yoke, either forming new States or joining others already in existence, was not realized by the statesmen of the Entente Powers till nearly the end of the war. And if they knew little, the peoples at large knew still less. The result was that there was no force of public opinion to check the arbitrary course of the men in power. These nearly all belonged to the old school of diplomacy, which was accustomed to assembling around a board of green cloth and to shuffling the smaller and subject races about, without consulting them in any way, as the pawns on the European chessboard. The Southern Slavs were subjects of Austria, an autocratic and reactionary empire; Italy was a free and enlightened democracy; therefore, the transfer of the Southern Slavs from the Emperor Franz Josef to King Victor Emmanuel was, in the opinion of the Entente, all to their advantage. Any protest on their part would be base ingratitude. In 1915 President Wilson had not yet enunciated the freedom-giving principle of the self-determination of peoples.

THE ENTENTE VIEW

The argument of the British, French, and Russian statesmen was therefore: "If we cannot bring Italy in on our side we may lose the war. If we lose the war the Southern Slavs will remain forever under the yoke of their Austrian masters. If we, by granting Italy's demands, win the war, the Southern Slavs will be incorporated in a free and democratic state like Italy. It is true they might, and doubtless would, prefer to join with their brothers-in-race of Serbia and Montenegro and form an independent Yugoslav State, but this is at present a Utopia, and the times are too critical for us to waste time on dreams that cannot be realized. They must understand that a 'half-loaf is better than no bread,' and let us, the Great Powers, in our wisdom, settle their destiny."

Of course, this was a purely unjusti-

fied conception of the problem of the Austrian Empire. A little study would soon have convinced the Entente statesmen of their complete error. They would have found that the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak aspirations were a tremendous force, and one with which the whole world would have to reckon. They did not realize that, as Joseph le Maître declared, "*une aspiration Slave fera sauter une forteresse*," and that when twenty-odd million Austrian Slavs had declared for independence no questions of policy or opportunity put forward by the so-called great powers would make them consent to become subject to any power against their will. Britain, France, and Russia could not plead entire ignorance of Yugoslav aspirations, for these, a few days before the signing of the secret treaty, were voiced with no uncertain sound in the Serbian Parliament by M. Pashitch, the Prime Minister.

In spite of the secrecy of the negotiations regarding the secret treaty, rumors had begun to circulate and had caused a certain amount of anxiety in Serbia. On April 15, eleven days before it was signed, M. Drogoliub Pavlovitch, a member of the Skupchtina, addressed the following question to the Government:

In the foreign press and in our own, rumors are obstinately in circulation concerning an early action on the part of Italy. This action is to be determined by certain compensations. These are again to be made at the expense of the Serbian, Croatian, and Slovene peoples. I ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister if these rumors correspond to the truth.

STATEMENT OF M. PASHITCH

In reply to this interpellation M. Pashitch, the Prime Minister, made the following declaration:

All I can say for the present in reply to the question of M. Pavlovitch is the following: It is true that rumors have reached us from various sides of pourparlers that have been begun between Italy and the powers of the Triple Entente for the participation of the former alongside the latter in the solution of the various questions. As before, rumors have been current that pourparlers have also been begun between Italy and Germany and Austria regarding the concessions which Italy could obtain by remaining neutral and associated with Germany and Aus-

tria. These rumors are not confirmed officially. This is why we cannot know whether or not they correspond to the truth. For it often happens that false rumors are spread with a view of bringing about declarations and of sounding the opinions and sentiments in certain quarters.

For the moment I cannot put faith in these rumors or believe that they conform with the truth, for I believe that Italy will not violate the principles in the name of which she realized her own unity. I do not think she will abandon this just principle at the time when we are seeking the solution of the problem of nationalities.

Italy realized her unity on the basis of the principle of nationalities. All her juridical science leads up to the inviolable postulate that the State must maintain and respect the principle on which it is founded. If it abandons it, it shakes its own foundations. This is why I think that Italy, in ranging herself alongside the Triple Entente, will be guided by the principle of nationalities and that she will be able to arrange her interests in the Adriatic in such a way that there will be no regrettable consequences either for her or for us, and that there will not be a disaccord between the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and the Italians. For it is only an accord between these two peoples that would furnish the surest guarantee against the "push" of Germany toward the Mediterranean.

In Italy there are great political men whose wisdom is able to appreciate the importance of an accord between the Serb-Croat-Slovene people and Italy, an accord which alone can assure the prosperity of the two peoples by increasing their mutual friendship and by assuring the communications between them for the development of their commerce. This is why, gentlemen, I think that the Italian statesmen will not be guided by the idea of obtaining a town or an island more or less. They must know in advance that Italy's force does not lie in this or that town or island, but in the friendly relations between her and the Serb-Croat-Slovene people.

These friendly and statesmanlike utterances of M. Pashitch found, however, no echo in Rome nor in the capitals of the Entente Powers, and did not prevent the signing of a treaty which bartered away the freedom of nearly a million Yugoslavs.

ITALY'S VIEWPOINT

If want of knowledge cannot be invoked on the part of Italian statesmen, what arguments, it will be asked, can be put forward by them in justification of

the terms of the secret treaty? The answer is: Reasons of strategy, and the necessity of assuring the safety of Italy in the future. In 1915 Italy had to consider two possibilities regarding the conclusion of the war. One was that it would end in a drawn battle, a kind of stalemate, as the result of which Germany and Austria would still remain in being as great powers, and still be a future menace for Italy. In these circumstances it was to Italy's interest, and it was even her duty, to assure herself of every possible strategic advantage, so that if she had ever to renew the struggle against Austria she would do so with as many trump cards in hand as possible. If the Austrian Empire still continued to exist, no free and independent Yugoslavia could come into being, so that Italy's annexations could not harm a State that was nonexistent.

The second hypothesis was that Austria should be defeated and dismembered, but that Russia should still exist as the greatest military and autocratic power in Europe. She would naturally establish herself as the protector of all the smaller Slav nations. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia would therefore only be outposts of the Russian Empire, and the menace of Pan-Slavism would replace the menace of Pan-Germanism on the Adriatic and elsewhere. By the secret treaty entered into by France, Britain, and Russia before the war, the latter power was assured the possession of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, so that, as the Black Sea fleet could enter the Aegean at any time, Russia might become a formidable rival to Italy in the Mediterranean. Through Yugoslavia she could challenge Italy's mastery of the Adriatic and from the Croatian and Dalmatian ports could threaten Italy's Adriatic coast line.

THE CHANGED SITUATION

Such a danger might be an excuse, if not a reason, for Italy's claim to Istria, Dalmatia, and the islands. In 1915 the realization of either of these hypotheses was possible and could be pleaded in justification of the terms of the secret treaty.

But in 1919 no such reason can be in-

voked. The Austrian Empire has ceased to exist, and Russia, as a military and autocratic power, has disappeared forever from the political stage. The new State of Yugoslavia has come into existence, but cannot threaten Italy or challenge her supremacy in the Adriatic. The new kingdom possesses no navy, and the great powers can make it a condition of its existence that it shall not create one. A country may raise an army in secret, but can never create a fleet without its being known. With the possession by Italy of Brindisi and Valona, Trieste and Venice, the Adriatic, from the point of view of naval strategy, becomes an Italian lake.

There is now no reason whatever why Italy should insist on receiving the strategic guarantees contained in the secret treaty. Great Britain and France both realize today the bitter injustice they did their gallant ally, Serbia, the "Piedmont" of the new Yugoslavia, by signing the secret treaty; but they do not, as long as Italy insists on her pound of flesh, know any way to escape from the dilemma in which they have placed themselves. The only solution would be that Italy should voluntarily renounce the terms of the secret treaty and thus set them free.

But this Italy shows no signs of doing. On the contrary, she even went beyond that document and claimed Fiume, to which in the treaty she renounced all claim, categorically admitting that it was a Croatian port.

ITALIAN IMPERIALISM

This is a fresh proof of the truth of the French proverb that *l'appetit vient en mangeant*. The concluding of the secret treaty has been the starting point of a wave of imperialism which has swept over the whole Italian peninsula. In addition to Yugoslav territory the secret treaty also assured to Italy the permanent possession of the Dodecanese, the twelve Greek islands she seized during the war with Turkey, and which, in spite of her written promise to evacuate them made in the Treaty of Lausanne, she still holds. She further disputes Greek claims to Northern Epirus, has proclaimed an Italian protectorate over

Albania, and demands large territories on the Turkish mainland.

We are thus brought face to face with a new Eastern question. With the possession of the Eastern Adriatic ports of Trieste and Fiume Italy would complete her control of the Mediterranean traffic to and from Switzerland, South Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Jugoslavia, and thus arm herself with an economic weapon of the first importance. Trieste has long been a centre of trade with the Levant. Its shipping and banking facilities will now fall into Italian hands and provide a powerful agency of peaceful penetration. The possession of the islands of the Dodecanese is a step-

ping-stone to the domination of a section of the Turkish Empire. But the realization of such vaulting ambitions can only be achieved by making *tabula rasa* of all the principles for which the United States and the Allies fought the war, and would simply be the substitution of Italian imperialism on a small scale for German imperialism on a grand.

Every real friend of Italy regards with anxiety the line of policy on which Baron Sonnino and Signor Orlando embarked, and is hoping that Signor Nitti and Signor Tittoni will renounce the grandiose visions of their predecessors and adopt a more sane and moderate policy.

[A Reply to the Preceding Article]

Italy's Rights Across the Adriatic

Italian Official Review in Justification of the Treaty of London and Italy's Claims

By CAPTAIN ALESSANDRO SAPELLI

[FORMER GOVERNOR OF BENADIR, EAST AFRICA; DIRECTOR OF ITALIAN BUREAU OF INFORMATION, NEW YORK]

CURRENT HISTORY MAGAZINE, in accordance with its non-partisan policy, submitted Captain Gordon-Smith's article on the Treaty of London, with his knowledge and approval, to Italian official representatives in America for a reply. The Italian view of the subject is given below.

THERE has been growing up in certain quarters a curious predilection to visit many of the ills of the Peace Conference on the Treaty of London—to hold up that document, amid all the covert diplomacy of the war, as the most iniquitous example, compared with the impiety of which the contracts of England and France to bestow Constantinople on Russia, Shantung on Japan, and to divide Asiatic Turkish vilayets between them, and even England's recent treaty with Persia, which renders the League of Nations still-born, loom almost in the light of sanctified covenants. Many censors of this supposed nefarious document cheerfully admit that it would not gleam with quite such an unholy light if only Italy would

do what England and France, however, reveal little intention of doing in regard to their own advantageous private engagements, and denounce the Treaty of London as a "scrap of paper."

The methods employed, the pressure brought to bear on Italy in order to have her Government consummate "*il gran rifiuto*," are quite familiar. They are not particularly praiseworthy, but that may be due to the character of the result they are feverishly striving to reach. And now the moral aspects of these methods and this pressure, which could hardly be attractively sustained by the British desire to perpetuate the Cunard concessions in the Adriatic and the French jealousy of Italian expansion in the Mediterranean, are receiving a con-