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P. COUNILLON, *L'Istros dans la Géographie de Strabon* · M. VASILJEVIĆ, *Translations of Saints' Relics in the Late Medieval Central Balkans* · V. SIMIĆ, *Popular Piety and the Paper Icons of Zaharija Orfelin* · A. SORESCU-MARINKOVIĆ & M. MIRIĆ & S. ĆIRKOVIĆ, *Assessing Linguistic Vulnerability and Endangerment in Serbia: A Critical Survey of Methodologies and Outcomes* · A. LOUPAS, *Interethnic Rivalries and Bilateral Cooperation: Aspects of Greek-Serbian Relations from the Assassination of Alexander Obrenović to the Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1903–1908)* · V. G. PAVLOVIĆ, *Le révolutionnaire professionnel 1934–1936 Tito à Moscou* · S. G. MARKOVICH, *History of Hellenic-Serbian (Yugoslav) Alliances from Karageorge to the Balkan Pact 1817–1954* · D. GNJATOVIĆ, *Evolution of Economic Thought on Monetary Reform in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes after the Great War* · G. LATINOVIĆ & N. OŽEGOVIĆ, *“St. Bartholomew’s Night” of Banja Luka: The Ustasha Crime against the Serbs in the Banja Luka Area on 7 February 1942* · I. VUKADINOVIĆ, *The Shift in Yugoslav-Albanian Relations: The Establishment of Ties between Albania and the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija (1966–1969)* · M. RISTOVIĆ, *Yugoslav-Greek Relations from the End of the Second World War to 1990: Chronology, Phases, Problems and Achievements* ∞

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constitution in 1910 took Bosnia from the imperial to the state principle of dealing with diversity, a view which is open to debate. In British East Africa, on the other hand, legislation encouraged racist policies.

The three comparative case studies are followed by two chapters which also take a comparative perspective, this time on Austria-Hungary and Britain as a whole, seeking to answer the questions raised in the introduction, especially in the light of the previous three chapters. Gammerl tracks the course of British legislation and the modes in which the empire's subjects from the colonies were denied British citizenship. Taking a much broader perspective than the one used in the three case studies, Gammerl seeks to arrive at some conclusions as to how the two empires operated and how they dealt with ethnic diversity in their respective territories.

Gammerl endeavours not to yield to the conventional portrayal of the two empires. This can best be seen from the way in which

he discusses the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Given the vast geographical area and a large time span encompassed by Gammerl's work, it should be noted that his account of Bosnia-Herzegovina and British East Africa would have been better had he used the source materials from local archives. This is a minor criticism compared with the undertaking of writing this book. The list of sources and literature is impressive and that alone is very useful to all researchers concerned with similar topics. The comparative approach gives the author the opportunity to add weight to his propositions and to answer important questions by establishing a link between geographically distant territories which are rarely viewed in the same context. Gammerl's monograph is a significant contribution to the field of comparative and imperial history. The comparative case studies that constitute the bulk of the book raise very interesting and very pertinent questions and the author seems to provide satisfactory answers.

ANDREA UNGARI, *LA GUERRA DEL RE. MONARCHIA, SISTEMA POLITICO E FORZE ARMATE NELLA GRANDE GUERRA*. MILAN: LUNE EDITRICE, 2018, 272 p.

*Reviewed by Konstantin Dragaš\**

Andrea Ungari, professor at the Guillermo Marconi University in Rome, in his latest study examines relations between military and civilian authorities in Italy during the First World War and the role played by the king Victor Emmanuel III. He explores the scope, limitations and real power of the royal government during the crisis of the Italian political system in 1914–1918 caused by Italy's entry into the Great War. At the same time, he studies the influence of the executive and military authorities – above all the Government and the Supreme Command – on the course of the war, as well as the contradictions of the Italian liberal system which, during this period, were an inevitable factor in final victory.

The first chapter – “La Monarchia nell'Italia liberale” – underlines the importance of the Albertinian Statute (1848) for the development of the Italian constitutional system and the contribution of this historical document to the delimitation of powers, rights and duties of the executive, legislative and military branches in Italy throughout the nineteenth century. The kings of the House of Savoy decisively interfered in foreign policy and the organization of the armed forces, overstepping their constitutional powers. In order to preserve

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the reputation of the Crown, they often opposed plans for reducing budget and expenditures for the army and military reforms. After Cavour's death in 1861, the lead in foreign policy shifted to King Victor Emmanuel II, as he began to play an active role and monopolize the field. Ungari raises the question as to whether such a system can be called a parliamentary monarchy, and defines it as a "hybrid mixture of constitutionalism and parliamentarism", in which the king, encountering weak or no government opposition to his plans, often confused or misinterpreted the limits of his powers. Having learned a lesson from his father's tragic experience and educated in the rationalist spirit, Victor Emmanuel III sought to be a democratic and constitutional king. He found support for his reforms in an understanding he reached with Giovanni Giolitti, the most prominent Italian politician at the turn of the century. During the reign of Victor Emmanuel III, military expenditures increased by more than 30%. In foreign policy, he moved towards Britain and France and away from Austro-Hungary, which he considered a potential enemy from the moment Franz Joseph had avoided visiting Rome after Umberto I's visited Vienna. The visit to the Russian court, his affection for the Slavic world, as well as personal interest in Serbia played a role in rapprochement to the Triple Entente. The author emphasizes that the refusal to renew the military convention with Germany (1901), various diplomatic problems with Austria-Hungary and two Moroccan crises contributed to Victor Emmanuel III's stronger commitment to building Italy as a world power. It is interesting to note that he occasionally was favourably disposed towards the Socialists, and that initially he was not in favour of Italy's military campaign in Libya (Tripolitania).

In the second chapter – "La scelta del Re" – Ungari argues that the king's choice (supported by the majority in the government) to declare neutrality in 1914, thus disregarding the exiting alliance with Central

Powers, stemmed from the fear that a war with Britain and France would mean the destruction of the Italian ports and navy. On the other hand, his readiness to consider the possibility of going to war against Germany and Austro-Hungary stemmed from the fear that Italy could be excluded from a future peace conference, regardless of the outcome of the war. The coming of the War brought the change of the Chief of General Staff in July 1914 since Alberto Pollio was succeeded by Luigi Cadorna. Thus, a period of frictions between the Supreme Command and the government begun. Due to unpreparedness of the army, the first conflict that broke out was the one between Cadorna (who called for urgent general mobilization) and Domenico Grandi, war minister (who advocated a reduction of financial resources for the army). Until the spring of 1915, the king did not intervene in that conflict. The appointment of Vittorio Zupelli as War Minister (the first minister from Istria) and Paolo Carcano as Minister of the Treasury marked the beginning of a fateful change in the relationship between the military and civil authorities. Ungari points out that the House of Savoy could not afford to have bearers of the 1848 political programme, mostly republicans, as proponents of Italy's entry into the war. Victor Emmanuel III passed confidential military reports on the movement of Austro-Hungarian troops to Britain and Russia. Queen Elena, as a friend of Charles Delme-Radcliffe's wife, head of the British military mission in Italy, influenced her husband to give up pacifism. Until Ungari's study, this topic has been neglected in Italian historiography. As the correspondence between Antonio Salandra, head of the Italian government and Sydney Sonnino, Minister for Foreign Affairs, from February 1915 shows, without the explicit consent of the king as the highest constitutional authority, it was not possible to sever ties with the Triple Alliance, despite considerable support for such a decision in the army. The king proved to

be a constitutional ruler, because he did not want the decision to go to war to be made by crown only. Despite ideological divisions, Giolitti, Salandra, Martini or other political actors refused to act so that all the responsibility for Italy's potential entry into the war on the side of the Entente would have fallen on the crown. The king's threat of abdication was aimed at swaying public opinion in favour of entering the war. Giolitti encouraged him in making that decision, above all with the goal of fulfilling Italy's international political obligations.

The third and fourth chapters – “L'azione di Vittorio Emanuele III nella 'guerra italiana' 1915” and “Monarchia, Sistema politico e Forze armate alla prova della Guerra” – relate the king's departure from his Roman residence, Villa Italia, and his permanence on the front during Salandra's and Paolo Boselli's governments. The king left Rome without pomp and ceremony and spent more than two years in Udine, living a soldierly modest life, which gave rise to the myth of the soldier-king (*re soldato*). Ungari notices that his leaving Rome had a negative impact on domestic political life, despite the king's wish to stay out of political quarrels. Ungari's conclusions on the liberal governments led by Salandra and Boselli and their relations with the Supreme Command and the king is based on their correspondence. Two opposing views emerged – the king, like Cadorna, believed that the civilian authorities should not interfere in the manner of conducting military operations, war tactics and deployment of units. He kept Salandra and Boselli governments out of political intrigues, and calmed disagreements between Sonnino, Leonida Bissolati and Cadorna. The parliament was “Giolittian” thus pacifist, and in order to counter the decisions of the government, some deputies voted for a stricter war policy on the Trento-Isonzo-Veneto front, without real insight in the dynamics of the war.

The king paid great attention to Britain, financially the strongest political centre

in Europe. He showed personal interest in sending of Italian troops to the Salonica front and the situation on the battlefields with Austria-Hungary, paying great attention to the procurement of loans, military equipment and material assistance from abroad. Some ambassadors, such as the British ambassador Rennell Rodd, had good personal reactions with Vittorio Emanuele II. The author points out that the king's distrust of the parliamentary system, fuelled by numerous dispatches, letters and notes from his ministers and diplomats (such as those sent by marquis Imperiali, Italian ambassador in London), grew during the war.

Ungari stresses that the actions of the Government and the decisions of the Supreme Command were often marked by internal political contradictions. Mutual misunderstanding often stemmed from personal animosities, uncontrolled desire for domination and fear that the outcome of the war might be attributed to some undeserving factor (either an allied country or a domestic power holder). Ideological rivalries also played a part. These conflicts arose as a consequence of long-lasting disputes and problematic perceptions of the sphere of responsibilities of particular authorities.

In the chapter on the difficult year 1917, Ungari describes the conflict between Bissolati and Sonnino. Bissolati as the Minister responsible for furnishing the Army with war material and provisions advocated full cooperation with the Allies, especially regarding full engagement on the northern front and even the revision of the London Agreement of 1915, while Sonnino was adamantly opposed. In the summer of 1917, the British War Cabinet encouraged the plan for a major offensive against Austria-Hungary on the Italian front, in order to create the conditions for a credible proposal for a separate peace as soon as possible. Or, Sonnino was against concluding a separate peace. It is interesting to note that Lloyd George considered that Italian pretensions to Trieste and its surroundings did not clash with Britain's

intention to preserve Austria-Hungary in some form after the war. However, Allied aid of 100 cannons arrived in October 1917. Ungari points out that Bissolati, Sonnino, Cadorna and Victor Emmanuel III were four key figures who, despite the lack of parliamentary support for their plans, pushed Italy further into the war.

In the last chapter, „Dal Piave a Versailles”, the author studies the background of the Italian defeat at Caporetto, and the connection between the 1917 Inter-Allied Conference in Rome and the aftermath of Cadorna's removal. Ungari shows that there were changes in the relationship between the Government and the Supreme Command after Cadorna was relieved of his duty. The appointment of Armando Diaz as Chief of Staff did not mean calming tensions. For example, after the victory at the Battle of Vittorio Veneto in 1918, Orlando and Sonnino demanded a lightning offensive against Austria-Hungary. Their decision, consequentially, required a new royal intervention in calming down “passions”. Ungari points out that the king's role was to maintain the balance of power in a complicated historical situation. He also writes

about the character of Sonnino's foreign policy underlying the fact that the king was not acquainted with many of his decisions. Thus, Sonnino demanded that the territorial aspirations of the Allies at the expense of the Austria-Hungary be reduced, while defending the territorial clauses of the London Agreement. Fearing secret agreements between the Allies and Austria-Hungary at the expense of Italy, Victor Emmanuel III advocated a conciliatory policy towards the South Slavs, even though, as diplomatic documents show, he counted on separating Croatia and Slovenia from Serbia. He also protested against the handover of the city of Smyrna to Greece, since it was initially promised to Italy. He perceptively foresaw the strengthening of the Catholic and Socialist movements in the country after 1918, but he remained dissatisfied with the treatment of Italy at the Versailles Peace Conference. At the same time, as an opponent of a radical change in the election law for the Senate, the king agreed to extending voting rights to women. All these changes, concludes Ungari, would accelerate the post-war rise of fascism.

STEFAN GUŽVICA, *BEFORE TITO. THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF YUGOSLAVIA DURING THE GREAT PURGE (1936–1940)*. TALLINN: TLU PRESS, 2020, 224 p.

*Reviewed by Rastko Lompar\**

The Stalinist purges in the Soviet Union remain an important yet controversial topic in historiography. Seemingly limited to a single country – the Soviet Union, they in fact are an important transnational phenomenon, both due to the fact that the NKVD bullets took the lives of many foreign communists, and that scant news of the purges rippled over the world stoking fears in the hearts of communists and anti-communists alike. Just like during the later Soviet interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1956 and 1968 respectively, the news of

the purges spread quickly and caused an international uproar. The grinning commissar standing over mass graves with a still smoking Mosin-Nagant revolver became the poster child for anticommunism in the late 30s. However, those that perished were relegated to oblivion, and only after the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 were some rehabilitated.

The book by Stefan Gužvica deals precisely with this important topic, as the

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