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Culture, arts, politics. Italy in Ivan Meštrović's and Bogdan Radica's discourses between the two World Wars

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In this article the activity and discourses of two Dalmatian public figures are taken into consideration: the sculptor Ivan Meštrović and the journalist Bogdan Radica. They both had an enormous influence on how the image of Italy was created and disseminated in Yugoslavia, in particular in the 1920s and 1930s. The analysis of their discourses is interpreted in terms of the concept of Dalmatia within a wider Mediterranean basin which also refers to two diverse conceptualizations of Yugoslavism, cultural and political. Meštrović's vision of Dalmatia/Croatia/Yugoslavia was based on his rural hinterland idiom enabling him to embrace racial and cultural Yugoslavism. In contrast, Radica, in spite of having a pro-Yugoslav orientation during the same period, did not believe in race, so for him the idea of Croat-Serb unity was more a political issue (to a lesser extent a cultural one).

Keywords: Dalmatia, Yugoslav-Italian relationships, Croatianness, Yugoslavism, Borderlands
Parole chiave: Dalmazia, Relazioni Jugoslavia-Italia, Croaticità, Jugoslavismo, Aree di confine

Introduction

This article takes into consideration the activity and discourses of the sculptor Ivan Meštrović and the journalist Bogdan Radica[1]. The choice of these two figures from Dalmatia, though very different in terms of their profession and political status in the interwar Yugoslav state (1918-41), has an important justification. Not only they both were influenced by Italian culture and heritage (displaying the typical Dalmatian ambivalence towards politics), but they also evaluated Italian heritage and politics in the Croatian/Yugoslav public sphere. Thus, their voice, heard in particular circles – Radica among intellectuals, and Meštrović in a wider public –, should be analyzed as it had an enormous influence on how the image of Italy was created and disseminated in Yugoslavia. Before dealing with their activity some clarifications concerning their ideological and political beliefs will be presented, in order to evaluate their visions of Italy. In turn, I will analyze the sources, giving then some general summaries about how this problem could be analyzed in terms of the concept of Dalmatia within a wider Mediterranean basin. This will also refer to two diverse conceptualizations of Yugoslavism – cultural and political.

[1] I would like to gratefully acknowledge Hannah Rickards for her proof-reading of this article, and Ellen Elias-Bursać for her assistance in the translation of the quotations.

Although, at least at a first glance, Radica and Meštrović could be taken as figures representing similar visions, such a simplistic impression should be abandoned. Indeed, in the 1920s and 1930s, the period of our particular interest in this study, they represented comparable standpoints in many respects – best epitomized by the fact that they both collaborated with the Zagreb-based cultural and political journal «Nova Evropa» – but their beliefs were based on slightly different ideological premises. The journal «Nova Evropa», edited by Meštrović's close friend and propagator of his art Milan Ćurčin, represented a liberal and democratic version of Yugoslavism (over time even a federalist stance) which was closer to Radica, at least in the 1920s. Meštrović at that time was advocating the integral and racial version of Yugoslavism (but not close to the Organization of the Yugoslav Nationalists Orjuna – a militant group of nationalists fostering Yugoslav sentiments)[2]. Thus, whilst the former saw Croatianness as something irrelevant with regard to the Yugoslav idea (at least in the 1920s), the latter – although influenced by the Slavic/Yugoslav ideologies of his native home *milieu* – preferred a more political and less cultural Yugoslav ideology[3], rather maintaining a safe balance between Croatianness and Yugoslavism. This was to have consequences: Meštrović, at least in the 1920s, would embrace cultural Yugoslavism, and Radica political Yugoslavism.

Meštrović's Italy

Ivan Meštrović was born in 1883 in Vrpolje, in Slavonia (his birth in Slavonia was due to the fact that his parents were seasonal laborers there), but his real homeland was the Dalmatian hinterland – the village of Otavice where he grew up. Thanks to rich patrons, who observed Meštrović's artistic talents, he went to school in Split and then to studies in Vienna. Because of the Viennese environment in which he actively participated, initially his concept of art developed in accordance with the Jungendstil aesthetic imaginations. In 1911 in the International Exhibition in Rome he was granted a prestigious award for sculpture. During the First World War he lived and travelled across Europe (Paris, Rome, London, Geneva) as an active member of the Yugoslav Committee which was advocating the creation of a South Slavic state. His exhibition in the London's Victoria and Albert Museum in 1915 was partly a political manifestation made for the sake of this idea. After the war he settled in Zagreb but was constantly travelling to Split (where he was de-

[2] The editorial policy of «Nova Evropa» was extensively against the radical nationalism of the Orjuna. In a volume published in 1924, Milan Ćurčin in his editorial presented the group, and especially one of its members, Niko Bartulović, in very negative terms.

[3] His stance, however, should be investigated more profoundly because for instance he was writing a language that was associated with Serbian (that is the Ekavian Shtokavian dialect with extensive Serbian vocabulary), and not Croatian (Jekavian) or his native Split vernacular (that was Ikavian). Since the choice of the language was (and still is) a sign of a political decision, the use of the Serbian in the press published in the Croatian capital Zagreb («Nova Evropa») was a kind of manifest. And this is in particular important because other contributors to this journal also used Jekavian, so he was able to choose the Croatian, but nevertheless he used Serbian.

signing his residence), to Dubrovnik, to Rome, to Paris, and to the USA. Acclaimed as the foremost living sculptor, along with Rodin and Bourdelle (with whom he extensively collaborated), he gained artistic commissions around the world. In parallel, he was politically active, not as a politician *per se* but as a fierce supporter of the Yugoslav unity, notably in the 1920s. With the death of the Croatian politician Stjepan Radić following the shooting in the Belgrade Assembly in 1928, he withdrew his support, and he devoted his artistic creativity to universal religious topics. Although he remained a supporter of a common Yugoslav state, Croatianness – that was somewhat backgrounded in earlier decades – gained in importance. Such a stance, linking Yugoslav and Croatian national ideologies, remained valid for him until the end of his life, although he grew more and more disillusioned with the idea of the South Slavic political unity. During the Second World War he was imprisoned by the Ustasha regime and detained in Zagreb, as an enemy of the fascist state, but because of the pressure from international circles, he was released (and went to Rome and Geneva). After the war he went into exile in the USA where he worked at two American universities: Syracuse University (NY, 1947-55) and the University of Notre Dame (IN, 1955-62). He died in 1962.

Meštrović's career is linked to Italy in various ways. As a Dalmatian he had personally experienced the Croat-Italian borderlands, with all its positive and negative aspects[4]. He lived in Italy between 1911 and 1915, and also during the First World War. Moreover, his international acclaim properly started in Rome in 1911 when he was granted the Grand Prix of the International Exhibition for sculpture (at the exhibition a project of *The Kosovo Temple* and sculptures of *The Kosovo Cycles* were displayed). Although an Austro-Hungarian citizen, Meštrović for political reasons did not exhibit in the Austro-Hungarian but in the Serbian pavilion. Meštrović admired Italy – its people, way of life, landscapes (as underlined by his son, Mate Meštrović) – but he was afraid of Italian cultural and political claims on his native Dalmatia. This is one of the reasons why he, alongside many of his Dalmatian compatriots, accepted the idea of South Slavic unity under the Serbian primacy and based on racial sense of belonging. Serbia – and the Yugoslav framework – seemed to have been a good protection against Italian political claims.

During and in the aftermath of the International Exhibition, Meštrović became popular in Italy. Many reviews and commentaries about his art were published in the press. Sibilla Aleramo in «Corriere della Sera» called his sculptures «real pieces of art» (*veri capolavori*), Leonardo Bistolfi called them «superb», Renzo Lanza in «La Vita» referred to Meštrović as «the great and colossal artist», Guelfo Civinini, also in «Corriere della Sera», as «one of the greatest artists of our time», Silvio Benco as «a giant», in «Il Piccolo della Sera». In his archive there are dozens of letters he received from various figures linked to the artistic and literary life of Italy, among others Sibilla Aleramo, Bruno Barilli, Leonardo Bistolfi, Gian Bistolfi, Felice Carena, Giovanni Cena, Ettore Cozzani, Ferruccio Ferrazzi, Augusto

[4] See I. Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje*, Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb 1969.

Ferrero, Antonio Maraini, Vittorio Pica, Guglielmo Pizzirani, Giuseppe Prezzolini, Giovanni Prini, Giovanni Rosandi, Lorenzo Viani[5].

Yet, there were also voices that called his art «barbaric» or «primitive» (Benedetto Croce, Guglielmo Ferrero, Emilio Cecchi)[6]. According to Duško Kečkemet, the author of a great biography of the artist, Ferrero held a lecture during the Rome's exhibition in 1911 in which he – following Croce's polemical stances – «fiercely criticized Meštrović's oeuvre as a barbaric invasion on thousand-year-old European civilization and culture» (a couple of years later, though, he became an admirer of his art)[7]. Although the term "primitivism" was contextualized within a very erudite explanation by Emilio Cecchi in his contribution on Meštrović entitled *Un primitivo secessionista* in «Il Marzocco»[8], and primitivism doesn't have to be straightforwardly negative in artistic criticism, Cecchi's stance could evoke the Western conceptual framework which perceived Slavs as inferior, and implicitly evoking the idea of *morlacchismo*. In dealing with the invention of the idea of Dalmatia as a region of "noble savages" by Venetian power centres during the Enlightenment (and with the production of the discourse on the "Morlachs"), Larry Wolff underlines that such a discourse justified colonization.

> Between enlightened Venetian patricians like Memmo and enlightened Dalmatian academics like Bajamonti there was often common political purpose in the context of an imperially inflected discursive rivalry. The Morlacchi, targeted by the Provveditori Generali as the crucial problem for administrative discipline and economic development, also became the focus for the rivalry inherent in Venetian and Dalmatian public debate. Because the Morlacchi did not speak for themselves, every entrant in the competitive discourse on Dalmatia spoke about them: defining their character, explaining their customs, explicating their interests, criticizing their inaptitudes, revealing their virtues, and claiming the prerogative to pronounce on their behalf. Discovering the Morlacchi, Venetians and Dalmatians together created the concept of *morlacchismo*[9].

In Wolff's analysis there is a direct link established between the then visions of the Morlachs and the Croatians/Yugoslavs in the interwar period (by the way incidentally, Meštrović himself was born and grew up in a prototypical Morlach environment). Following that logic, drawing attention to any form of primitivism and barbarism among the people of the Dalmatian hinterland (even if expressed with good intents), could

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[5] The letters were published in a bilingual publication, Croatian and Italian. They uncover how diverse networks Meštrović had in Italy. Some of them demonstrate his professional relationships, whilst the others real friendships. See *Talijanska pisma Ivanu Meštroviću 1911-1921*, ur. K. Milačić, Globus, Zagreb 1987.

[6] Meštrović was also disapproved in Yugoslavia. Antun Gustav Matoš criticized him for his real or alleged lack of Croatian patriotism, Miroslav Krleža for his real or alleged imitation of Jungendstil and his religious stance, Moša Pijade for his real or alleged Gothicism.

[7] D. Kečkemet, *Život Ivana Meštrovića (1883.-1962.-2002.)*, sv. 1, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 2009, p. 237.

[8] E. Cecchi, *Un primitivo secessionista*, in «Il Marzocco», 19 November 1911, p. 2.

[9] L. Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs*. *The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2001, p. 318.

be taken as an assertion of superiority and – hidden or overt – colonial tendencies. Although Croatian/Yugoslav scholars traditionally took Alberto Fortis'[10] discourse as a positive interpretation of the Morlachs (Croats/Yugoslavs) enabling it to make their idyllic way of life known to the world, newer conceptualizations – such as those by Nino Raspudić and Nikola Markulin[11] – strive for post-colonial readings based on the theories of Michel Foucault, Edward Said or Maria Todorova. Raspudić calls this attitude «semi-orientalism»[12], finding not even one Italian intellectual discussing the Easter Adriatic coast without prejudices. Since the book by Fortis in various translations became known to the European public, one could speculate about the influence it had on the invention of what will be called by Todorova Balkanism. If this is based on plausible grounds, then his travelogue could be taken as a point of departure, a foundation stone for this vision. Raspudić documented that Fortis' discourse – and its re-contextualisations in the early-modern and modern Italian literature – has a lot in common with the Orientalist and Balkanist discourses, presenting the Morlachs as underdeveloped, childish, emotional, animal and savage[13].

Even if some of Raspudić's interpretations might seem to be too categorical, in particular the way in which he subsumes Italian writers to the pre-defined "semi-orientalist" pattern, the Italian visions of Croatia/Yugoslavia are indeed often embedded within such prejudices. One has to add, however, that such stereotypes were also accepted by the side that had been stereotyped, namely the Dalmatians themselves (the Croats and Yugoslavs). Meštrović himself also insisted on his nation's/peoples' uniqueness referring to these very stereotypes. This is what he once officially underlined:

> Both my nation and I – hitherto considered barbarians and an inferior race – sense a certain lack of trust in European culture, so we express ourselves in a way that does

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[10] Alberto Fortis (1741-1803) was a Padua-born Venetian priest who wrote the travelogue *Viaggio in Dalmazia* (rapidly translated into several major European languages), a work which created a powerful vision of the Dalmatian hinterland, known as Morlachia. In this work, he offered, as Larry Wolff underlined, «a sympathetic anthropological treatment of "barbarous" customs in Dalmatia and an ambivalent verdict upon "the society that we call civilized"». Ivi, p. 2.

[11] N. Markulin, *"Prijatelj našega naroda": Prikazbe Drugoga u djelu* Viaggio in Dalmazia *Alberto Fortisa*, in «Povijesni prilozi», n. 38, 2010, pp. 214-233.

[12] N. Raspudić, *Jadranski (polu)orijentalizam: prikazi Hrvata u talijanskoj književnosti*, Naklada Jurčić, Zagreb 2010.

[13] Danijel Dzino demonstrated that such a stereotypical vision does not only characterize literature and politics but that it flooded scholarship on the Eastern Adriatic, in particular the influential studies of Fernand Braudel. According to Dzino, «The hinterland of the eastern Adriatic, modern Dalmatian Zagora, Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania, suffered a great injustice in Fernand Braudel's work. These mountainous regions are represented in his work as backward and poor, and the societies as timeless and unchanging. This "barbarism" of the hinterland is sharply juxtaposed with a distinctive civilization that the great historian attributes to the Dalmatian littoral and its cities» and thus «it seems that his attitude drew upon existing discourses on barbarity and civilization in the Adriatic hinterland, deriving from the early modern period and the Enlightenment». See D. Dzino, *Subverting Braudel in Dalmatia: Religion, Landscape and Cultural Mediation in the Hinterland of the Eastern Adriatic*, in *Across the Corrupting Sea: Post-Braudelian Approaches to the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*, eds. C. Concannon, L.A. Mazurek, Routledge, London-New York 2016, p. 194.

> not conform to the conventional model of thinking and speaking in Europe. […] I consider it an injustice that we are deemed inferior to others because we follow our own path, so I desire to – and I think I may – express in my works something which will not be without benefit for the entire world. Thus, I attempt to speak my own language, in my own way; I want to breathe with my own lungs, and yet I want my work to contribute to the altar of Enlightenment of all the nations[14].

It is not by accident that these words were spelled out in Venice, in the same Venice that – according to Meštrović – was responsible for making Dalmatia inferior. The paradox is that by saying this he made these stereotypes alive, at least to some extent (the very same applies to all kind of Meštrović's biographies written in Croatia and Yugoslavia in which his homeland was deemed "primitive" and "simple" but "brave" and "just", and the life of young peasant boys and shepherds was framed as hard but idyllic). The acceptance of the stereotypes, however, is in the discourse of the sculptor reversed and turned the other way around: from the passive and negative aspect of the stereotype into an active and positive one. While not rejecting the Western hegemony over defining what is "ours" and what is "alien"/"savage"/"primitive", he at the same time objects to the justification for the colonization. By saying that he wants to «speak my own language», he directly objects to the colonial standpoint according to which the colonized does not have a proper language to speak about itself, so the colonizer must invent it – for the sake of the colonized. Meštrović wants to *speak* and *act* against the current state of affairs, against the inequality and asymmetry, and does it – to his best conviction – in the name of his people.

Within the context of the Italian-Yugoslav relationship, Meštrović's activity in the interwar period was either of artistic or of political nature though in most instances the political and artistic elements intertwined.

In some of the exhibitions in Italy in which he participated, his political engagement was backgrounded (this was partially due to the disappointment he felt for the Yugoslav state), for instance during the XVI Biennale of Venice in 1926 or in Florence in 1927 in the Seconda Esposizione Internazionale di Grafica. In both a new tendency in his art gained importance, namely religious sculptures. The very same applies to his fascination for Michelangelo Buonarroti. Meštrović was the author of essays dedicated to the Tuscan master, and imaginary talks with him in the form of theatrical dialogues (the collection of the former was published integrally as late as in 2010, whereas the latter in 2007)[15].

His first essay was published in «Nova Evropa» in 1926, in a volume entirely dedicated to Michelangelo (except for Meštrović, there were old and new Italian contributors like Ascanio Condivi, Giorgio Vasari, Adolfo Venturi, Giovanni Amendola, Giovanni Papini, and also the Portuguese Francisco de Holanda, and

[14] M. Ćurčin, *Ivan Meštrović*, Nova Evropa, Zagreb 1933, p. 12.

[15] The dramatic pieces were written in the Ustasha prison in Zagreb in 1941 and were published integrally in 2007: see I. Meštrović, *Razgovori s Michelangelom*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 2007.

the Polish-Jewish Julian Klaczko, translated into Croatian/Serbian, and Bogdan Radica). Meštrović calls the artist a «great Italian», alongside Saint Francis, Dante, Giotto, Galileo. Yet, when he deals in this essay with the art of Michelangelo, he concentrates on what is universal and not particularly Italian (according to him Michelangelo blended Christian and Hellenic artistic and philosophical idioms)[16]. Meštrović's vision of fine arts – «the one that arrives through our senses to our brain» – is the following: it «consists of two elements: the material phenomenon and the spiritual phenomenon that is made alive»[17]. Whilst the former is visible, the latter is not visible. Referring to Michelangelo, he believes in what he calls «the eyes of the spirit» – the imagination – that imposes a form on what is still unformed, and not yet visible. This is how great artists create because not everybody has such eyes of the spirit. His vision of art is totalistic and prophetic:

> The idea is a form of divine nature, and the visual form of it is its image. The form and idea, elevated thought and a visual manifestation of nature in the heart of divinity, are the face and obverse [of one entity]. Therefore, the very artistic concept is, in its narrow essence, the most similar to the natural concept. Its source is a mystery, as is our life, and the source is the same. […] It is a voice and melody [*pjesma*] of spiritual life, but at the same time physical life, and assumes the form as life itself, in order to be understood for our physical existence. This is the evidence that humanity, if eternal in its entirety, is temporary at the level of the individual[18].

When reading this fragment, it seems obvious that this is not just an essay on Michelangelo but also an article on Ivan Meštrović, his concept of art (a return to classical forms) and his vision of himself. Thus, through Michelangelo's figure Meštrović tries to explain to the public his artistic manifesto and at the same time, one may assume, to understand himself as an artist. If this assumption is plausible, then we can see that he attributed to himself similar values and properties that Michelangelo was believed to have: not just a gift to provide an artistic form to artifacts, but also the ability to express deep properties of things or spiritual life, linking it directly to divinity. There is no doubt that Meštrović thought on himself as a prophet. Therefore, it is not surprising that he didn't want to follow Michelangelo in literal sense, since «[t]o imitate means not to understand Michelangelo. Michelangelo is the only one»[19]. However, some of his sculptures from the 1920s reflect Michelangelo's style (like *A woman on the sea*, 1926, or *Reminiscence*, 1929).

Apart from these aesthetic investigations, there are at least two events which put Meštrović at the very heart of hot political discussions over the disputed territory of Dalmatia. The first is his sculpture of Gregory of Nin, located in the Peristyle in

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[16] I. Meštrović, *Mikelanđelo*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 14, n. 9-10, 1926, p. 255.

[17] Ivi, p. 246.

[18] Ivi, p. 248.

[19] This fragment was not in the text of «Nova Evropa» but was incorporated later into this essay: see. I. Meštrović, *Michelangelo. Eseji umjetnika o umjetniku*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 2010, p. 7.

Split in 1928, and the second is as a signatory to a manifesto that was addressed to "Mr. Mussolini" in 1932.

As far as the statue of the bishop Gregory of Nin is concerned, the making and exhibiting of this huge statue (nearly 8 meters high) in the heart of the Ancient Split had extreme political connotations. This was due to the bishop's alleged activity in resisting the overwhelming use of Latin in liturgy and giving priority to Slavic liturgy, which was after the First World War conceptualized as a Croatian/Yugoslav-Italian conflict. Until recently historiography maintained that at the 928 AD synod in Split, when one of many attempts to prohibit the Slavic heresy was undertaken, bishop Gregory was said to have spoken out in its defence. Yet, «today we know that Gregory of Nin was not a proponent of Glagolitic at all – on the contrary, in fact, but legend is more tenacious than scientific knowledge, and Glagolitic is a symbol of Croatian resistance in the struggle for identity and reserve towards Rome»[20]. The legend, however, was – and is – believed to embody Croatian patriotic tendencies. And Ivan Meštrović was one of those who wanted to commemorate him with this historical meaning. The statue was erected a thousand years after the first synod in Split, in the city centre, in the ancient Peristyle (to the outrage of the city's residents, conservators and art historians), where the disputes on the prohibition of Slavic liturgy were said to have taken place.

A huge sculpture by Meštrović captures Gregory in a violent movement, as he is declaiming his theses. The statue could only be perceived as threatening.

Ivan Meštrović, Gregory of Nin[21]

[20] M. Czerwiński, *The Bard of his People*, in *Adriatic Epopee. Ivan Meštrović*, red. M. Czerwiński, Ł. Galusek, B. Vujanović, International Cultural Centre, Kraków 2017, p. 23.

[21] «Nova Evropa», v. 20, n. 1-2, 1929.

As Vojeslav Molè underlined: «He is frozen in mid-stride, his body only half-turned towards his listeners, and the long, nervous fingers on his left hand, full of life to their tips, grid a huge book, while his right hand is raised in a violent gesture, so that his liturgical robes billow out as if in a strong wind, and the gestures of his fingers speak, persuade, and threaten»[22]. As a commentary to this assumption could be a monograph entitled *Our Adriatic* published a decade later, in 1938, in which Meštrović contributed. He wrote there: «As a nation on the Mediterranean Sea, and a Mediterranean nation, we the Croats throughout twelve centuries have been guarding our Adriatic Sea, part of the Mediterranean Basin […]. Whoever comes […] will be accepted by us as a friend, as a brother, but not as a master/sovereign [*gospodar*]»[23]. He did not only alarm, he also menaced, and it is clear to whom the menace was addressed.

In spite of these controversies, Meštrović insisted on putting the statue in front of the Cathedral, in the ancient Peristyle of Diocletian's palace. Why? It seems obvious that he wanted not just to make of Gregory a hero of Split and Croatia/Yugoslavia but also to re-contextualise this very place. Since the Latin antiquity, and thus the Peristyle, was then commonly associated with Italian tradition (and Italian intellectuals were glorifying the genius of the great Italian heritage), the sculpture made by Meštrović may be understood as making this site Slavic, in literal terms meaning moving into this Latin home. Slavs/Croats seemed to have embraced this place from that moment on.

The statue of Gregory of Nin in the Peristyle[24]

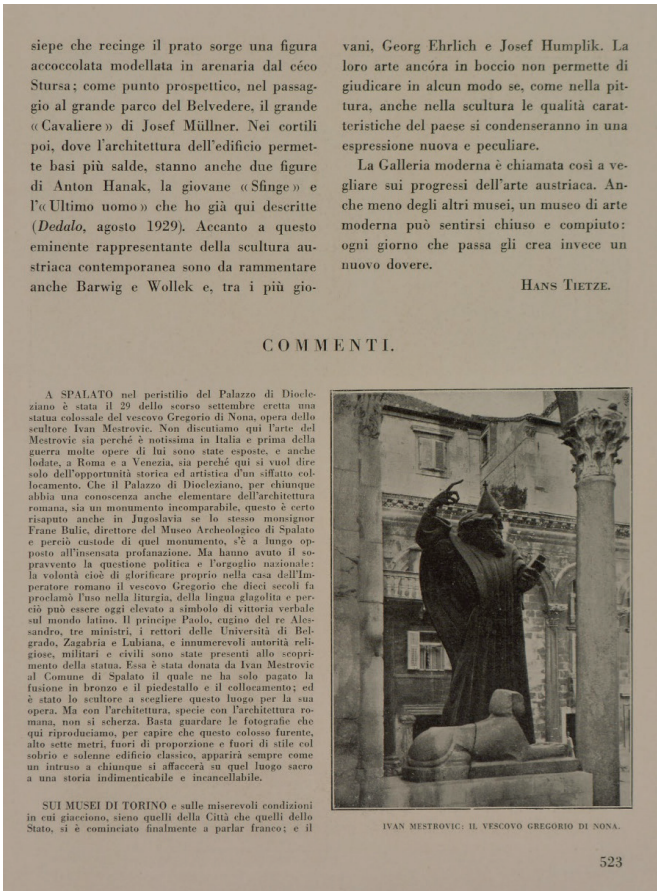
[22] V. Molè, *Ivan Meštrović*, Gebethner i Wolff, Kraków 1936, reproduced and translated into English in *Adriatic Epopee. Ivan Meštrović*, red. M. Czerwiński, Ł. Galusek, cit., p. 127.

[23] I. Meštrović, *Stražimo stražu*, in *Naš Jadran*, ur. C. Fisković et al., Archiv za propagandu Jadrana ivršnog odbora Jadranske straže, Split 1938, pp. 11-12.

[24] «Dedalo», a. 10, v. 2, 1929-1930, p. 524.

This very act of erection of the monument was condemned by some key figures of the Italian artistic *milieu*, partly precisely because of the reason that was described. For instance, Ugo Ojetti, in the artistic journal «Dedalo», underlined that his act was a «political issue» of «national pride», and warned about

> the will to glorify properly in the house of the Roman Emperor bishop Gregory, who proclaimed, ten centuries ago, the use of the liturgy in the Glagolitic language, […] which today elevate him as a symbol of a verbal victory over the Latin universe […]. It is enough to watch the photography, which we reproduce, to understand that this furious colossus, seven meters high, without proportions and out of style with the sober and solemn classical building will always seem to be an intruder to anyone who looks out over this sacred place to an unforgettable and permanent history[25].



siepe che recinge il prato sorge una figura accoccolata modellata in arenaria dal céco Stursa; come punto prospettico, nel passaggio al grande parco del Belvedere, il grande «Cavaliere» di Josef Müllner. Nei cortili poi, dove l'architettura dell'edificio permette basi più salde, stanno anche due figure di Anton Hanak, la giovane «Sfinge» e l'«Ultimo uomo» che ho già qui descritte (*Dedalo*, agosto 1929). Accanto a questo eminente rappresentante della scultura austriaca contemporanea sono da rammentare anche Barwig e Wollek e, tra i più giovani, Georg Ehrlich e Josef Humplik. La loro arte ancóra in boccio non permette di giudicare in alcun modo se, come nella pittura, anche nella scultura le qualità caratteristiche del paese si condenseranno in una espressione nuova e peculiare.

La Galleria moderna è chiamata così a vegliare sui progressi dell'arte austriaca. Anche meno degli altri musei, un museo di arte moderna può sentirsi chiuso e compiuto: ogni giorno che passa gli crea invece un nuovo dovere.

HANS TIETZE.

COMMENTI.

A SPALATO nel peristilio del Palazzo di Diocleziano è stata il 29 dello scorso settembre eretta una statua colossale del vescovo Gregorio di Nona, opera dello scultore Ivan Mestrovic. Non discutiamo qui l'arte del Mestrovic sia perché è notissima in Italia e prima della guerra molte opere di lui sono state esposte, e anche lodate, a Roma e a Venezia, sia perché qui si vuol dire solo dell'opportunità storica ed artistica d'un siffatto collocamento. Che il Palazzo di Diocleziano, per chiunque abbia una conoscenza anche elementare dell'architettura romana, sia un monumento incomparabile, questo è certo risaputo anche in Jugoslavia se lo stesso monsignor Frane Bulic, direttore del Museo Archeologico di Spalato e perciò custode di quel monumento, s'è a lungo opposto all'insensata profanazione. Ma hanno avuto il sopravvento la questione politica e l'orgoglio nazionale: la volontà cioè di glorificare proprio nella casa dell'Imperatore romano il vescovo Gregorio che dieci secoli fa proclamò l'uso nella liturgia, della lingua glagolita e perciò può essere oggi elevato a simbolo di vittoria verbale sul mondo latino. Il principe Paolo, cugino del re Alessandro, tre ministri, i rettori delle Università di Belgrado, Zagabria e Lubiana, e innumerevoli autorità religiose, militari e civili sono state presenti allo scoprimento della statua. Essa è stata donata da Ivan Mestrovic al Comune di Spalato il quale ne ha solo pagato la fusione in bronzo e il piedestallo e il collocamento; ed è stato lo scultore a scegliere questo luogo per la sua opera. Ma con l'architettura, specie con l'architettura romana, non si scherza. Basta guardare le fotografie che qui riproduciamo, per capire che questo colosso furente, alto sette metri, fuori di proporzione e fuori di stile col sobrio e solenne edificio classico, apparirà sempre come un intruso a chiunque si affaccerà su quel luogo sacro a una storia indimenticabile e incancellabile.

SUI MUSEI DI TORINO e sulle miserevoli condizioni in cui giacciono, sieno quelli della Città che quelli dello Stato, si è cominciato finalmente a parlar franco; e il

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U. Ojetti, Commenti[26]

[25] U. Ojetti, *Commenti*, in «Dedalo», a. 10, v. 2, 1929-1930, p. 523.
[26] Ibid.

Such a discourse was conceptualized within a binary axiological frame[27], in which two worlds are represented: the Latin universe and Glagolitic language (as a matter of fact, Glagolitic language never existed, but only Glagolitic scripts). Whilst the former is linked to the house of the Roman Emperor (as a sober and solemn classical building), the latter is deemed as an intruder that has no sense for proportions and style. For the readership such a dichotomy might have been interpreted as a struggle of civilization against barbarism. It was, thus, labeled the devastation, the barbarian act over the most harmonious beauty, as called by Molè – who himself, however, had understanding for this act – «the most beautiful marble salon of the world»[28].

There were also Croatian art historians and urbanists, citizens of Split, who opposed this erection. One of them was Frane Bulić[29], one of the signatories of the letter to Mussolini, whose political orientation was on the Yugoslav/Croatian side. Thus, his resistance to this act was based on different grounds. This is what he said to Bogdan Radica:

> Oh, my Bogdan. That little Meštrović and that little Tartaglia[30], that's all Freemasonry, which rode us. We will have a hard time getting rid of this. There is also this Belgrade. And you know them. What will Diocletians and Diocletian's palaces mean to them? They are from out there, mountain people. They don't care about cultural monuments. That's how all this [heritage] will fall[31].

Such a vision is also based on the same dichotomous assumption, civilization-barbarism, but it put a different variable. Whereas in Ojetti's discourse there was a Roman/Latin – Slavic/Croatian opposition, here there is another opposition: between the citizens of Split and the highlanders from the hinterland. Bulić considers

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[27] Meštrović's activity was a couple of times linked to Ojetti. Although this Italian intellectual praised his sculptures at the Rome exhibition (where many criticized it), he then in 1914, during the Biennale in Venice, attacked him in «Corriere della Sera» for his alleged plagiarism of sculptures by Antoine Bourdelle. In response, Meštrović's admirer and friend Leonardo Bistolfi criticized Ojetti. A possible inspiration was, later on, denied by Bourdelle and his sculpture of Heracles – which was pointed out by Ojetti as a pattern copied by Meštrović – was chiseled two years later than Meštrović's, in 1909 (see D. Kečkemet, *Život Ivana Meštrovića*, cit., p. 278).

[28] V. Molè, *Ivan Meštrović*, cit., p. 128.

[29] Frane Bulić (1846-1934) was a Croatian Catholic priest, historian and archaeologist. His research activities were devoted to the study of the ancient and medieval history of Dalmatia.

[30] In this quotation Bulić refers to the Ban of Littoral Banovina Ivo Tartaglia (1880-1949) who openly supported the erection of the monument of Gregory of Nin, and was considered one of the most important politicians of a pro-Yugoslav orientation. Tartaglia was a Dalmatian politician, prominent member of the Croatian Democratic Party (Hrvatska demokratska stranka) and the Croatian Popular Progressive Party (Hrvatska pučka napredna stranka) whose aim was the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Between 1918-28, he was Mayor of Split and Ban of Littoral Banovina (1929-32). He was also co-founder of «Jadranska straža» (The Adriatic Guard, 1923-41), the journal in which Croatian/Yugoslav rights for Dalmatia were promoted.

[31] B. Radica, *Živjeti-nedoživjeti: uspomene hrvatskog intelektualca kroz moralnu i ideološku krizu Zapada*, v. 1, Knjižnica Hrvatske Revije, München-Barcelona 1982, pp. 68-69.

himself a civilized citizen, while the newcomers from the mountains were felt as a menace to the old order. To understand this perception, let's see how he experienced Dalmatian heritage:

> I kept it all [the heritage] with the peoples, to sustain it. Not because of the Latins or Italians. Diocletian was our man, he came from the people, and he loved this country of ours, how he could not, since he emerged from it. They say that he was not a Slav, but that does not matter, he was born near Jadra, as the people still believe. They accuse me saying that he tortured Christians. I know that too, but he did it because he had to, so that those [factors] in Rome would not condemn him too much. Don't forget, if it had not been for Diocletian, his palace and Salona, there would have been no Croatian kingdom, because they were interconnected[32].

On the other hand, many Croatian/Yugoslav historians and art historians, such as Grga Novak, Viktor Novak, Ljubo Karaman, as well as Ivo Tartaglia, praised this erection indeed as a symbol of the Slavic prevalence over Romance (see also all contributions to «Nova Evropa»).

The letter to Benito Mussolini that was co-signed by Meštrović will be analysed in the following section, because it also concerns the activity of Bogdan Radica.

Radica's Italy

Bogdan Radica was born in 1904 in Split (or rather Veli Varoš, a location in a close vicinity of the Diocletian Palace, but not a part of the very centre of the town) and died in New York in 1993. After his schooling in his native town, he moved first to Ljubljana to study and then to Florence. He spent five years in Italy, in Florence and in Rome, from where he was a contributor on Italian affairs to the Yugoslav newspapers («Obzor») and cultural-political journals («Nova Evropa»). In 1929 he was appointed as an official correspondent of the Yugoslav Press Agency Avala to Greece and also the press representative of the Yugoslav Embassy (until 1934). Between 1933 and 1939 he lived in Geneva as a member of the Yugoslav delegation to the League of Nations. In 1939 he moved to Belgrade from where he was sent to the USA, where he worked for the Press Agency of Yugoslavia in New York. In conflict with the Yugoslav Ambassador Konstantin Fotić, Radica started to support the partisan guerilla of Josip Broz Tito in the American press (in spite of his anti-communist stances he wanted to make evident to the public of the Allied countries that the majority of Croats did not support the fascist Croatian Independent State). In 1945 he returned to Belgrade, as the new regime aimed at engaging him in the press agency. Disappointed with the politics in Yugoslavia, which he labeled as «fear» and «terror», he fled to the USA. He lived in New York, spending long months in Italy, in the house of the Ferrero family in Ulivello (Tuscany). He died in 1993 in New York.

[32] Ivi, p. 69.

Not by accident, the title of the chapter of Radica's memoirs describing his study and activity in Italy (1925-29), is *Maturation in Italy*[33]. His stay in Italy could indeed be understood in terms of his ideological and spiritual development. Firstly, Radica was in direct contact with the foremost Italian intellectuals (with some of them he made long-lasting friendships), presenting their texts in the Yugoslav press («Nova Evropa», «Obzor»)[34]. He also interviewed them, publishing two books of interviews: the first one with Guglielmo Ferrero[35] and the second one – a collection of interviews – with the greatest European thinkers, like Thomas Mann, Benedetto Croce, Paul Valéry, André Gide, José Ortega y Gasset, Julien Benda, Jacques Maritain[36]. Secondly, he made familial ties with Guglielmo Ferrero by marrying his daughter Nina. Contained in his memoirs there is an image depicting the baptism of their son Leo, where, besides Nina, there are Guglielmo Ferrero, Gina Lombroso Ferrero and the best-man Carlo Sforza. The picture was taken in Geneva in March 1936 when both Ferrero and Sforza were in exile. At the very same time Radica, as a Yugoslav diplomat to the League of Nations, was also in Geneva. Thus, his ties with the family of his father-in-law dated at least from 1926.

Radica emphasized the fundamental role that Italian anti-fascists, notably Ferrero, Salvemini and Sforza, played in his maturation in Italy. Yet, there are at least two more things that have to be mentioned. Witnessing the rise of Fascism and violence in Italy made him skeptical of this ideological option. Moreover, as a Dalmatian he was particularly aware that it was Fascism that expressed political claims on Eastern Adriatic more than the other political positions had done. Since anti-fascists were more in favor of granting Yugoslavia Dalmatian territories (referring mainly to Salvemini and Sforza, inspired by Giuseppe Mazzini's thought), and were more reluctant to affirm nationalism based on the idea of renewing the Roman Empire, it was natural to stick to them. However, his stances about Fascism and fascist intellectuals will neither be extensively negative nor positive.

His public involvement with Italian matters began in 1926 and lasted until 1940. In 1930 Radica moved to Greece, and started to write from and on Greece, but he still published articles and translations about Italy. This ended in 1931. From that time on he wrote rarely, mainly on Greek, French and English literature, as well as

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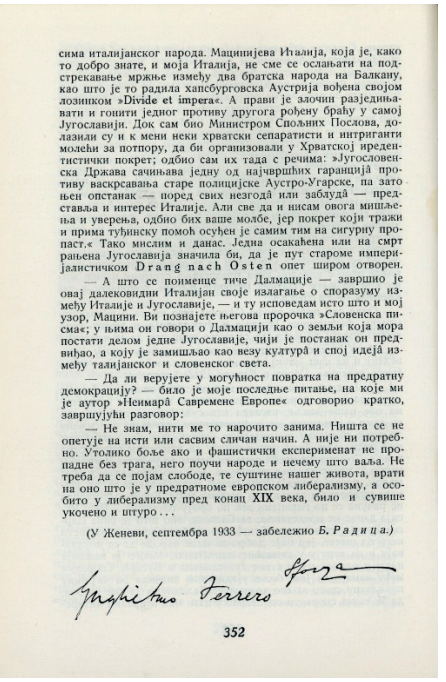
[33] B. Radica, *Živjeti-nedoživjeti*, cit., pp. 113-242.

[34] Radica – in his contributions to «Nova Evropa» and «Obzor» – made it possible for the Croatian/Yugoslav public to get accustomed with the following Italian intellectuals and politicians: Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Papini, Carlo Sforza, Luigi Pirandello, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Adriano Tilgher, Gaetano Salvemini, Giuseppe Prezzolini, Giovanni Gentile, Oscar Randi, Ardengo Soffici, Vincenzo Cardarelli, Mario Vinciguerra, Guglielmo Ferrero, Giuseppe Rensi, Giovanni Amendola, Luigi Salvatorelli, Oliviero Zuccarini, Ernesto Buonaiuti, Benito Mussolini.

[35] *Colloqui con Guglielmo Ferrero-seguiti dalle Grandi pagine*, a c. di B. Raditza, Nuove Edizioni Capolago, Lugano 1939.

[36] B. Radica, *Agonija Europe. Razgovori i susreti*, Geca Kon, Beograd 1940. Most of these contributions are interviews, short commentaries, and essays. It needs to be clarified that the interviews are, in the majority of instances, a blend of two genres: interview and reportage. Such a blend enables the interviewer to interpret the interviewee's words and provide settings in which the interview is conducted.

on general problems concerning the spirit of modernity, with the exception of September 1933 and of a big contribution in October 1934. Nevertheless, when dealing with all-European problems, Radica always made references to Italy, which he knew best, and with indirect reflections to the theses associated with people whose ideas he had admired most, such as Ferrero, Sforza and Salvemini.



сима италијанског народа. Мацинијева Италија, која је, како то добро знате, и моја Италија, не сме се ослањати на подстрекавање мржње између два братска народа на Балкану, као што је то радила хапсбурговска Аустрија вођена својом лозинком »Divide et impera«. А прави је злочин разједињавати и гонити једног противу другога рођену браћу у самој Југославији. Док сам био Министром Спољних Послова, долазили су и к мени неки хрватски сепаратисти и интриганти молећи за потпору, да би организовали у Хрватској иредентистички покрет; одбио сам их тада с речима: »Југословенска Држава сачињава једну од најчвршћих гаранцијâ противу васкрсавања старе полицијске Аустро-Угарске, па зато њен опстанак — поред свих незгодâ или заблудâ — представља и интерес Италије. Али све да и нисам овога мишљења и уверења, одбио бих ваше молбе, јер покрет који тражи и прима туђинску помоћ осуђен је самим тим на сигурну пропаст.« Тако мислим и данас. Једна осакаћена или на смрт рањена Југославија значила би, да је пут староме империјалистичком Drang nach Osten опет широм отворен.

— А што се поименце тиче Далмације — завршио је овај далековидни Италијан своје излагање о споразуму између Италије и Југославије, — и ту исповедам исто што и мој узор, Мацини. Ви познајете његова пророчка »Словенска писма«; у њима он говори о Далмацији као о земљи која мора постати делом једне Југославије, чији је постанак он предвиђао, а коју је замишљао као везу културâ и спој идејâ између талијанског и словенског света.

— Да ли верујете у могућност повратка на предратну демократију? — било је моје последње питање, на које ми је аутор »Неимарâ Савремене Европе« одговорио кратко, завршујући разговор:

— Не знам, нити ме то нарочито занима. Ништа се не опетује на исти или сасвим сличан начин. А није ни потребно. Утолико боље ако и фашистички експеримент не пропадне без трага, него поучи народе и нечему што ваља. Не треба да се појам слободе, те суштине нашег живота, врати на оно што је у предратноме европском либерализму, а особито у либерализму пред конац XIX века, било и сувише укочено и штуро . . .

(У Женеви, септембра 1933 — забележио *Б. Радица.*)

Guglielmo Ferrero Sforza

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Last page of the conversation of Bogdan Radica
with G. Ferrero and C. Sforza in Geneve[37]

Besides widening his scope of inquiry (from Italy to the whole continent and global problems), there were other tendencies in his activity worthy of note. Firstly, Radica turned from a journalist who had covered "objective" information, without giving his own evaluation, into an intellectual who expressed his stances more and more extensively (this applies notably to his contributions in «Nova Evropa», since in the daily «Obzor» articles were less engaged, as well as to interviews with Italian intellectuals). Secondly, whilst at first he focused on particularities, over time he referred to more general observations, giving also more profound interpretations of the currents in politics, culture and literature.

He collaborated with the journal «Nova Evropa» (Zagreb, 1920-41), that was the mainstream medium of the Yugoslav-oriented (but not integralist nationalistic) intelligentsia in Croatia. It was a very prominent publication and «the *New Eu-*

[37] «Nova Evropa», v. 27, n. 10, 1934, p. 352.

ropa's team was a highly distinguished one»[38]. The journal, apart from domestic issues, had notoriously given space to topics concerning foreign affairs, notably from Western Europe and Russia. Its pro-Western liberal orientation was easily visible, together with a rather negative attitude towards Fascism and Bolshevism (that were many times labeled as «totalitarian»).

Italy – historically but with emphasis on current problems – was one of the mostly represented country in «Nova Evropa». This was particularly because of Radica's contributions (he was called «our continuous correspondent from Italy»). It seems that he was the one who conceptualized sections on Italy, proposing authors and key problems. It is clear that Radica advocated anti-fascist positions though not overtly, in particular at the very beginning, when he had a reluctance to uncover his political stances.

His first contribution is a translation of the introduction of the book by Gaetano Salvemini *Dal Patto di Londra alla Pace di Roma* (*La diplomazia nella grande guerra*). Although some parts of the original version were omitted, a great deal of information was included[39]. Radica – as in many other instances – provided his own comment on the author and his status in Italy (this section is called *Political portraits*) writing, among other things, about Salvemini: «More than a historian, Salvemini gained in our country sympathies when he, during these unsettled years, battled against Italian irredentist politicians»[40]. This portrait is very positive as he is believed to struggle for «moral issues»[41]. Radica seems to follow Salvemini's concept of Italian political life which is perceived as a duality embodied by two politicians: the nationalist Antonio di San Giuliano, and the internationalist, democratic and socialist Leonida Bissolati. Whilst the former is deemed nationalistic (like Sidney Sonnino, who became the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1914), the latter is directly connected with the democratic tradition of the Risorgimento, notably with the figure of Giuseppe Mazzini.

Yet, Radica was much more insightful and cautious. Firstly, he gave voice to his protagonists of both tendencies (sometimes without criticism). Secondly, he tried to distinguish differences between figures that on the face of it represented one option.

The first volume of «Nova Evropa» in 1925, entirely devoted to Italy, was titled *Today's Italy*. After an introduction by Milan Ćurčin, Radica singled out contributions of the most representative intellectuals of contemporary Italian cultural/political life: Giovanni Papini, Guglielmo Ferrero, Adriano Tilgher, and Giuseppe Prezzolini. Their texts are presented in Radica's translation, along with copious commentaries on the authors. The same applies to the volume entitled *Fascist Italy*

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[38] I. Ćurčin, *The Yugoslav* Nova Evropa *and its British Model: a Case of Cross-Cultural Influence*, in «The Slavonic and East European Review», n. 3, 1990, p. 461.

[39] In his memoires, Radica wrote about his meeting with Salvemini in which the latter expressed his wish for this introduction to be translated into Croatian in order, as he had underlined, to make his stance on Dalmatia heard in Yugoslavia, as an opposite vision to that of the Italian political claims on the Eastern Adriatic coast: B. Radica, *Živjeti-nedoživjeti*, cit., p. 120.

[40] B. Radica, *Politički portreti (Gaetano Salvemini)*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 11, n. 18, 1925, p. 570.

[41] Ibid.

(how it is seen by them)[42]. In this volume overtly fascist writers are presented, such as Giovanni Gentile, Oscar Randi, Ardengo Soffici, Vincenzo Cardarelli. In all of these contributions Fascism – even called the «Fascist Gospel» by Gentile – is celebrated. The key-words of this discourse are: body, spirit, faith, State (with capital letter), beauty of sacrifice, (fascist) religion, immortal Italian thought, revival, national will, action and so on. But again, Radica's portraits of these figures are very non-engaged (one can sometimes think that he has nothing against them). He tries to understand what made these intellectuals join the fascist movement, mentioning possible reasons: «desire for authorities», «classical conceptualisation of the problem of state and life». The Reale Accademia d'Italia [*Talijanska Akademija*] is described by him in an ambivalent way. On the one hand it is «one of the most cultural values that Fascism has given»[43], but on the other it is «managed by only one party, it will be subject to influences that has nothing to do with the real requirements of an academy»[44].

The two-volume issue entitled *The Contemporary Italian Thought*[45], is entirely dedicated to those intellectuals who were, in general, taken as opposing Fascism, like Adriano Tilgher, Benedetto Croce, Mario Vinciguerra, Guglielmo Ferrero, Giuseppe Rensi, Giovanni Amendola, Luigi Salvatorelli, Oliviero Zuccarini. Their background and their beliefs differ, and Radica deliberately exemplifies this by providing correspondence between Tilgher and Ferrero, in which a deep division between the two in their interpretation of totalitarianism is expressed[46]. The whole two-volume issue is important in giving space to figures of the Italian opposition and, as one can assume, it uncovers the ideological profile of the journal in a period of deep political tensions between Italy and Yugoslavia. It seems that the editors strove to re-conceptualise the image of Italy in the vision of domestic public space, which was dominated by the Italian Fascism, and demonstrate that there was another Italy – an Italy struggling against oppression.

Yet, Radica in this discussion still keeps distanced, not revealing his own beliefs. This is best exemplified in volume XVII, number 2, issued in 1928. His contribution, having an evaluative title, *The Twilight of Europe*, could suggest that the author would refer to his own vision of the problem, but it is not the case. Instead, he concentrates on civilizational problems provoked by the clash of the West and the East. These questions refer also to very frequent discussions at the time about alleged Germanic and Romance dualism, associated not only with racial prejudices but also with the Protestantism versus Catholicism dichotomy. Radica is very cau-

[42] «Nova Evropa», v. 13, n. 8, 1926.

[43] B. Radica, *Talijanska Akademija*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 13, n. 8, 1926, pp. 266-267.

[44] Ivi, p. 267.

[45] «Nova Evropa», v. 15, n. 10-11, 1927.

[46] The discussion between Tilgher and Ferrero was triggered by the review Ferrero wrote on Tilgher's book *Relativisti contemporanei* (published in «Il Secolo», 13 January 1922). The author responded in an open letter to Ferrero, which was then included in a new edition of the book (1923), and Ferrero published his new response to this on 20 January 1922. The polemic concerned the way capitalism and relativism should be understood and tackled in the context of the totalitarian tendencies and the nature of the so-called qualitative and quantitative civilization.

tious, and he only provides the voices of his interviewees: Ferrero, Tilgher, Rensi, Papini, Giuliotti and Marinetti (these contributions were earlier – in a sequence of short notes – published in the daily «Obzor», in 1926 and 1927). The reader is informed on what divides the Italian intellectuals but not about what Radica himself thinks about the divided sides except for the very fact that Europe is in crisis.

The first article in which Radica reveals some of his viewpoints is published in a volume partly dedicated to the problems of Christianity, the relations between state and Church, and the Vatican[47]. In this issue the contributions of Benedetto Croce and Ernesto Buonaiuti are published, while Radica's article *The Vatican on the Crossroads (from the condemnation of* Action française *to the clash with Fascism)* gives an overview of philosophical and political aspects of the problem. In his view, the ideology of the Action française, notably after its condemnation, was best suited in Italy, because «Mussolini, with his Fascist state, [is] the real implementation of this ideology». Yet, this ideology is deemed «reactionary», «catholic-nationalistic», «a false Catholic ideology». Radica stressed the inconsistency between the «Christian concept of the relationship between the individuals and the state» ("etatism", "totalization" of the state, sacralization of Mussolini), which in turn means that it is «the opposite of the ideology based on emphasizing nationalistic feelings»[48]. He interprets why the Pope (Pius XI) made concessions to fascist Italy in the first years of the new regime, but – although his stance here is overtly anti-fascist – he does not condemn the Vatican but attempts to understand it. His position in undoubtedly on the side of the Church which, as he sees it, is changing so that «the Pope understood that Fascism is a huge danger […] and not solely Fascism, but nationalism of all kinds»[49]. Pacifism starts to gain greater importance in his vision, which could be of Catholic provenance, but it seems more to be a reflection of the political concept of Ferrero. The stress on pacifism and democracy will be more and more dominating Radica's interpretations.

And this is indeed the case in the volume entitled *Today's Italy*[50]. While confronting opposing ideological voices, for instance those of Tilgher and Gentile, Radica underlines that the former «reveals richly and convincingly the absurdity of Gentile's reactionary thoughts about the State»[51]. The climax of his thinking, at least at first glance, as a reaction to endlessly asked questions about who is right, is spelled out in this significant quotation: «It seems this today's Italy is fed up with sentimentalism, [with] thousands of pilgrims and globetrotters walking all around, who write songs to her natural beauty, and who kiss her shoes as if she is a troubadour princess; this has become unbearable to her and she wants to speak out in a different language. One has to understand this spiritual need and respect the feeling coming out from profundity»[52].

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[47] «Nova Evropa», v. 18, n. 3, 1928.

[48] B. Radica, *Vatikan na prekretnici*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 18, n. 3, 1928, pp. 85-88.

[49] Ivi, p. 93.

[50] «Nova Evropa», v. 22, n. 4, 1930.

[51] B. Radica, *Današnja Italija*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 22, n. 4, 1930, p. 202.

[52] Ibid.

There is, thus, a new Italy, Radica seems to be saying, and this very fact should be, according to him, accepted. But even though this provokes his disappointment rather than approval, he keeps on asking questions: «Maybe this will overturn and revive values, and thus realise its centuries-old dream! Maybe from this chaos and raving, from these disturbed notions and messy theories, new thoughts will emerge, and a new mission will appear for the Italy of tomorrow?»[53]. So, although Radica's statements are getting more and more shaped within the critical response to Fascism, he is still – at least in some areas – reluctant to specify his stance directly. He remains ambivalent. Guglielmo Ferrero, whom he takes as an ideal, wouldn't probably give any chance to this new Italy, as Radica does.

If one compares Radica's discourse with those by other contributors dealing with Italy, one notices his distance in describing Italian Fascism. Except for the reaction already provided, it suffices to give the example of what Albert Haler writes on the same subject and in the very same volume, just after Radica's article. The content of this article is centered on the «cynical cruelty of the fascist authorities», and a direct question is asked: «Where does such cruelty come from in a nation with such global cultural traditions?»[54].

When examining Radica's contributions, I found it difficult not to wonder why Radica – being so close with the anti-fascist intellectuals in Italy – had not engaged in the pro-Yugoslav campaign their colleagues for the journal «Nova Evropa» carried out. His involvement was epitomized in two domains: reactions to the Italian political stands and engaged writings about the disputable cultural heritage of Dalmatia and Istria.

His activity in the former domain was notably intense when «Nova Evropa» published an article, signed by prominent Yugoslav intellectuals (among them notably Croats), which was a sort of manifesto concerning the Italian-Yugoslav politics on Eastern Adriatic coast. The contribution, entitled *The Adriatic Question. A Recommendation to B. Mussolini*, was signed, to point only some of them, by Frane Bulić, Ljuba Babić Gjalski, Josip Plečnik, Branislav Nušić, Joza Kljaković, Milivoj Dežman, Izidor Cankar, Vladimir Nazor and Ivan Meštrović[55]. The text, referring to a statement of Mussolini's to the French press, opposed the Italian political claims on Eastern Adriatic coast. It provoked a critical response written by Oscar Randi under the title *La Questione Adriatica – Replica alla Nova Evropa* (published in «La vita italiana»)[56], that was translated in «Nova Evropa» very quickly, in January 1933. In this text – that was re-titled as *Italian Response to our Adriatic Question* – Randi points out inconsistencies and contextualises the manifesto. The author accused the signatories of being members of the Freemasonry (the Lodge of the Great Orient), and that «the *ambiente* of "Nova Evropa" is saturated by Masonic

[53] Ibid.

[54] A. Haler, *Na kojoj su strani "varvari"?*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 22, n. 4, 1930, p. 202.

[55] «Nova Evropa», v. 25, n. 10, 1932.

[56] «Nova Evropa», v. 25, n. 12, 1932.

mentality»[57]. In response to this, Milan Ćurčin published his commentary, emphasising inconsistencies in Randi's text (Ćurčin, in addition, denied any association with the Masonry among the signatories). It is fairly surprising that Radica – who was the most prominent expert in Italian affairs – did not contributed to this hot discussion in this very moment. In the latter domain, Radica, while writing a lot about Italy, nevertheless decided not to take part, at least in this period, in the dispute over the cultural heritage of the Eastern Adriatic coast. Seven volumes had been published entirely dedicated to Dalmatia, Istria, the Littoral (Primorje), and to Gregory of Nin[58].

Even in the coverage of Italian controversial figures, he did not emphasize his comments. In one of his columns in which Italian political and cultural life was presented, Radica recounted what Giovanni Papini had answered regarding his dislike of the people of the Balkans (*Balkanci*). This is what Papini said:

> In a spiritual sense you gave nothing or very little; and you have notorious pretensions that you are great. You are the initializers of all wars, you are the cause for all the conflicts. You are even right as you now laugh because you balkanized the whole of Europe. This is probably your biggest accomplishment. I, myself, have respect for some of the greatest Balkan people, for instance Diocletian, Hieronymus, Tommaseo, Meštrović[59].

Even such a statement – based on generalizations, prejudices and sense of superiority – was not commented on by Radica.

There are two possible explanations for such a lack of activity. Either he was afraid of possible reactions among his Italian friends (Papini) or he wanted to keep a position of "objective" journalist. In his memoirs, written fifty years later, his interpretations of the 1930s are far more explicit, and far more anti-fascist. For instance, he then wrote that Fascism «conducted the war against liberal and independent intelligentsia by various means of violence»; fascists in turn «were burning down and destroying the flats of their victims». He was also more explicit in pointing out the reason for which Fascism emerged. According to him, from the 1880s onwards, the army, police, bureaucracy and, «in general, all the low and middle class along with the aristocracy», «profoundly obsessed with the ultra-nationalistic and imperialistic spirit», were later «the main column of triumphant Fascism»[60]. The same applies to the Italian-Croatian relations at that time. Whilst in the period between the wars he did not sign the declaration to Mussolini, and did not write even one article questioning Italian fascist claims, in his memoirs he emphasizes «the lies that our

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[57] O. Randi, *Talijanski odgovor*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 26, n. 1, 1933, p. 5.

[58] In his memoirs, Radica wrote that some of his articles in «Obzor» – those with «negative evaluations of Fascism» – remained not signed, whereas in those neutral Radica's signature was underlined (see B. Radica, *Živjeti-nedoživjeti*, cit., p. 200).

[59] B. Radica, *Anekdote o talijanskim piscima*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 12, n. 9, 1925, p. 284.

[60] Id., *Živjeti-nedoživjeti*, cit., p. 118.

Adriatic coast is Italian» resulted in «slavophobia»[61]. Such clear stances were not spelled out in his writings of 1920s and 1930s. Of course, such an inconsistency – that by itself could be a matter of a separate investigation – may be easily understood in terms of the circumstances that followed that period. Maybe, the political circumstances in the 1930s did not appear so evident to him as they did later on, in particular after the savagery of the Second World War.

Radica's stance differs also with respect to Benedetto Croce. In the writing of «Nova Evropa», Croce was presented as the most farseeing intellectual, the most profound spirit of the anti-fascist Italy (as was said, Croce was even a notorious contributor to «Nova Evropa», and the most constant represented writer of all foreign intellectuals). Yet, in the memoires Croce has a much more ambiguous image. Firstly, according to Radica, Croce «was not of high convictions about the Slavs» and moreover he «belonged more to this general vision of the Italian nationalistic bourgeoisie than to the ideas of Ferrero, Salvemini or Sforza»[62].

Furthermore, Croce was «indecisive in his attitude to Fascism»[63] and, according to Radica, Salvemini «noticed that in fact Croce's philosophy was responsible, among others, also for the phenomenon of Fascism»[64].

Radica's last description of Italy before the war was published in October 1934. This is a kind of travelogue in which Radica, travelling from Greece (where he lived at the time) to Italy, contemplates the nature of Italian Fascism. He underlines that in the whole of the Balkans there is a «lack of confidence» to Mussolini's efforts[65], but more importantly he reflects with concern on the currents in every-day life in Italy. He notices a discrepancy between common people and politicians. A gondolier from Venice, presented as an example of a commoner, says: «here in Venice we love all people». But, at the same time, «Mussolini and whole his media speak about war and blood»[66]. After a couple of years living in Paris and Athens, Radica notices a difference: «In a train to Milan, Italians do not talk to each other like they used to earlier. Fascist insignias on all caps, and in all possible varieties, signify social standings, corporations, military ranks, and so on, they speak about Mussolini's Italian man. The spirit keeps silence, what dominates is caution»[67].

Even though this vision seems to be negative, articulated also by the use of such words like «fascist totalization», some of the fragments seem to give a more positive evaluation. He underlines: «Such an implementation of a new fascist corporative State […] gives Fascism a historic role in the formation of the Italian nation and Italian state. Unifying Italy, in a definitive way, Fascism also rises up because of its durability over what could be a simple party regime»[68].

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[61] Ivi, p. 119.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ivi, p. 135.
[64] Ivi, p. 137.
[65] B. Radica, *Italija 1934*, in «Nova Evropa», v. 27, n. 10, 1934, p. 383.
[66] Ivi, p. 384.
[67] Ivi, p. 385.
[68] Ibid.

Although Radica held anti-fascist (and anti-communist) beliefs before the war, he was reluctant to articulate them in public. However, when the protagonists whom he admired, Ferrero and Sforza, were in exile, he wrote essays without revealing his political stances. Yet, in his memoirs he presented himself as an active and fierce enemy of this Fascism, nearly as a victim of it. There is an occurrence mentioned by Radica in his memoires that could, at least to some extent, justify such a position. Namely, Radica maintained that in 1939 he returned to Belgrade, with his wife Nina, where he was to be nominated as the head of the Yugoslav Government Office for Information. This appointment failed to take place, however, due to pressure exerted on the Yugoslav government by the Italian minister of Foreign Affairs, Galeazzo Ciano. This information was provided by authors Đurašković and Czerwiński[69], but the only source documenting this is Radica himself, namely in a letter he sent to the Yugoslav Ambassador to the United States Konstantin Fotić[70], in which he complained about this diplomat's disapproval making it impossible for him to talk on the radio. In this official letter (dated 12 September 1942, New York City), referring to the brutal fascist policy being pursued over Ferrero, he stressed that «because of the order given by Hitler and Mussolini» to the Yugoslav Government, it effectively «banished Ferrero's wife and me from Belgrade»[71]. Radica implied that this happened because of their belonging to the anti-fascist elites.

Conclusion

The problem of Italian-Croatian mutual stereotypes, as expressed by the protagonists of this essay, has relevance not only in terms of the creation of imaginations and dominant discourses about the "other", but also because it triggers an important question concerning the Croatian culture in general. As proved above, Ivan Meštrović and Bogdan Radica conceptualized Italy in a slightly different way. Such diverse standpoints could, of course, be taken as an expression of individual preoccupations, and this is fully acceptable, as both Meštrović and Radica were strong personalities. However, I think there is another solution to this dilemma, that does not reject this individual aspect, but enriches it with a nuance.

For this purpose, it is necessary to understand their origins. True, both were Dalmatians, but originating from two distinct areas of Dalmatia. Whilst Meštrović was from the rural and montanious Dalmatian hinterland (*Dalmatinska zagora*), Radica was born and grew up in Split (in the then outskirts, but in the urban space). These

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[69] S. Đurašković, *Mediteranizam Bogdana Radice kao ideja slobode nasuprot totalitarizmima*, in *Split i Vladan Desnica 1918-1945. Zbornik radova s Desničinih susreta*, ur. D. Roksandić, I. Cvijorić Javorina, Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Zagreb 2016, pp. 234-235; M. Czerwiński, *Čvorovi prijepora: jezici i znakovi tradicije*, Alfa, Zagreb 2020, pp. 129-146.

[70] Konstantin Fotić (1891-1959) was a Serbian diplomat and ambassador to the USA (1935-44).

[71] Hrvatski državni arhiv, Zagreb, 1. fond/ HR-HDA-1769 Radica Bogdan, letter from Radica to Fotić, 12-10-1942.

two parts were different not only in terms of a typical rural-urban dichotomy. Split has never been a part of the Ottoman Empire, but of the Republic of Venice, whilst the hinterland was under Turkish rule for over two centuries. Whereas Radica's ancestors, though commoners, not from high or even middle class, used to co-exist within the atmosphere of the Mediterranean-type of communes[72], Meštrović's family originated from the so-called Dinaric culture (living for centuries under the Ottomans and with direct presence of Oriental and Orthodox population). Radica's close ancestors were craftsmen and local businessmen, Meštrović's were shepherds and *harambašas* (senior commanders among the hajduks). Radica's vernacular language was the urban Chakavian with Romance lexical elements, Meštrović's vernacular was rural Shtokavian with Oriental/Turkish influxes, based on folklore. The heroic *haiduk* tradition of the hinterland was initially alien to the people from Split, even though they were fascinated by these "pure" and "original peoples", labelled – with superiority – as *vlajs*[73]. Radica, in his memoirs, described how his mother disliked that he got on well with one of such *vlajs*, Mate Ujevi (and Meštrović was in Split officially called *vlaj*).

Both protagonists of this essay published their memoirs decades later, in the 1960s (Meštrović) and in the 1980s (Radica). They confirm that these very cultural models, on the one hand the patriarchal and rural Dalmatian hinterland, and on the other the urban Split, are decisive factors in their upbringing. Meštrović called himself a "Yugoslav nationalist", while Radica's self-portrait is shaped against this kind of Yugoslavism. The objections Radica had towards the Yugoslav racial ideology (and, thus, cultural Yugoslavism) could be placed within two conceptual frames. One is derived from his attitude on the religious tradition, and the other from a sense of belonging to the Mediterranean civilization. When defining the ideological content of the Yugoslav nationalists, Radica underlined:

> This intelligentsia, essentially patriotic *à la* D'Annunzio, believed that Yugoslavism existed in all those regions where the song about Kraljević Marko was sung, both in Dalmatian Zagora and on the Dalmatian islands, especially on Hvar, as well as in the Dalmatian towns. Meštrović's Vidovdan Temple with all its attributes and figures taken from folk poetry, especially with Kraljević Marko, Jug Bogdan, Majka Jugovića, Kosovska Djevojka and Srđa Zlopogleđa, was a plastic model of the so-called Vi-

[72] The pedigree of his family, the one he inherited and accepted consciously – with some minor corrections – for his entire life is associated with the tradition of the *puntars,* that is the proponents of the Slavic idea (*jugoslavjanstvo*) and, as propagated by some, of the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia. This concept, which became essentially popular in 1848, characterized people who acted against the *autonomaši* (the autonomists).

[73] The term *vlaj* is a variety from the original and polysemantic term *vlah* (it has referred to national and/or religious and/or social groups). From the perspective of the urban inhabitants of Dalmatian coast the term *vlaj* has been used parallelly with the term *morlacco*. As a matter of fact, the latter term is believed to originate from the Greek *Μαυροβλάχος* (meaning the Black Vlah/Vlach). See G. Novak, *Morlaci (Vlasi) gledani s mletačke strane*, in «Zbornik za narodni život i običaje», n. 45, 1971, pp. 579-603; I. Bešker, *O povijesnoj posebnosti "vlaja", zvanih i "Morlacchi"*, in *Zbornik Drage Roksandića*, ur. D. Agičić, H. Petrić, F. Šimetin Šegvić, FF Press, Zagreb 2019, pp. 451-464.

> dovdan national philosophy of life. Chiseled in Meštrović's vision, this philosophy was in fact a mixture of primitive Slavic paganism, drowned in vague and foggy Hinduism, which gradually turned into a confused theosophy, studded with Orthodoxy as the anti-thesis of Roman Catholicism. In that philosophy Croatianness disappeared and was lost, for it was considered to be artificial Germanism, Hungarianism and Latinism. The Belgrade style of Ekavština was accepted as a model against the Zagreb linguistic and stylistic way of expression[74].

Radica was not a clericalist, though he had been a member of the Catholic Youth in Split, against the will of his father (who considered himself Catholic but not radically religious). Yet, Catholicism was for him a way of life, a civilizational framework, that defined his small homeland. And this attitude became more and more important for him when the proponents of Yugoslav nationalism associated it with the Serbian Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy, with the 19th century tendencies glorifying Slavdom as something essentially anti-Western, was believed to better express the spirit of Slavicness. This is why Meštrović – who believed in such a vision – saw Venice as the personification of Italianism, and this is why Radica rejected such an interpretation. He tried to place the Venetian legacy within the medieval mentality typical of multiethnic states, such as a nationally indeterminate commonwealth, a kind of a community of interests: Venetianism. He wrote: «To see in Venice the prelude to Italian nationalism means to make a profound mistake, which is not far from the mistake of identifying the Ottoman Empire with Turkish nationalism»[75]. Radica, in spite of having a pro-Yugoslav orientation during the same period, did not believe in race so for him the idea of Croat-Serb unity was more a political issue (to a lesser extent cultural). In Radica's vision nations are not racially pure but come into being in the course of processes, shaped by the concepts of *longue durée*, face to face with other ethnic groups, a particularly natural process in the borderlands such as Dalmatia. This position, even though opting for Croatianness and the Yugoslav state, did not neglect a wider historical framework, in the case of Dalmatia – the Slavic-Romance symbiosis, syncretism or even synthesis. Radica wrote essays in the 1930s in which the problem of the blending of Romance and Slavic cultures is conceptualized. For the understanding of this process Radica uses a Mediterranean framework, which enables him to place Dalmatia as a periphery of the Mediterranean – as a place where East meets West[76].

It seems to be clear where the difference between the two protagonists is. Meštrović's vision is more folkloristic, and Radica's more intellectualized. The first is emotional, the second is rational. The former is a civilizationally indeterminate amalgam, the latter is consciously Western. Meštrović, regardless of the fact that

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[74] B. Radica, *Živjeti-nedoživjeti,* cit., p. 59.

[75] B. Bogdan, *Vječni Split*, Ex Libris, Zagreb/Split 2002, p. 27.

[76] On Radica's visions of Croatian traditions within the Mediterranean, see: S. Đurašković, *Mediteranizam Bogdana Radice*, cit. and M. Czerwiński, *Mediteran-prostor susreta, sučeljavanja i stapanja. Bogdan Radica, Ivan Meštrović, Nedjeljko Fabrio*, in «Republika», n. 1-2, 2018, pp. 63-73.

the traits of the Western spirit can be attributed to him, had a total vision of Dalmatia/Croatia/Yugoslavia, with a strong emphasis on his rural hinterland idiom. With the use of such a framework, cultural Yugoslavism could indeed be formulated. In contrast, Radica's inculturation into the urban Mediterranean *milieu*, in Split, resulted in embracing political Yugoslavism.