

ITALY'S ACCESSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION

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Italy's accession to the United Nations is a minor issue in Italian post-war foreign policy, but this does not make it any less worthy of attention, considering the importance it had for a number of years.

It has generally been neglected by historiographers. As for the writings of the original protagonists, apart from Mario Toscano's articles ⁽¹⁾ there are a few references in Egidio Ortona's memoirs ⁽²⁾. Yet there is a vast amount of published documentation. Interesting material has been published in various volumes of American documents from the period 1943-1955, and in the 10th series of Italian documents referring to 1943-1948. For if we are to carefully examine this subject and fully grasp its significance over the years, we have to return to the linkage between Italy and the United Nations, that is to say, the time the United Nations existed, but not the United Nations Organization. It is a history which unfolded in four phases, beginning with the 1943 Armistice.

For the Italy-United Nations linkage started after the overthrow of Mussolini, when the king and Badoglio decided to seek a way out of the conflict by getting Italy to change sides. "*He had come to discuss the question of how Italy could arrange to join the United Nations in opposition to Germany with the view to expelling the Germans from Italy in collaboration with the Allies*", wrote General Smith in the minutes of his meeting with

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⁽¹⁾ Mario Toscano, *Italia ed ONU*. In "*Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*", 1955, no 3 ; Id., *L=Italia nell=ONU*.ivi, 1956, n° 1 ; republished in Mario Toscano, *Corsivi di politica estera 1949-1968 for Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*. Milano, Giuffrè, 1981, pp. 17-25.

⁽²⁾ Egidio Ortona, *Anni d=America*, vol. I : *La ricostruzione* : 1944-1951, vol. II : *La diplomazia* : 1953-1961. Bologna, Il Mulino, 1984 and 1986.

Castellano in Lisbon on 19 August 1943⁽³⁾. The Allies responded by insisting, first of all, that Italy should sign the military armistice ; and then, after beginning to fight the Germans, the conditions would be in place for Italy to establish a different relationship with the United Nations. I have dealt elsewhere⁽⁴⁾ in some detail with this lesser known aspect of the history of the Armistice, and so I shall therefore not dwell at length on it here. I should just like to mention that, having met the condition for the cessation of hostilities (the 3 September military armistice) at his first meeting with the British and American envoys of the Allied Command, McMillan and Murphy, in Brindisi on 15 September Badoglio officially requested that “Italy be considered an allied country of the United Nations⁽⁵⁾. The reply this time was “*co-belligerence*”, an undefined formula which was intended to be a substitute for alliance, but which, after signing the unconditional surrender on 29 September in Malta, proved to be just a word, with no legal and political substance, as had been clearly stated in the declaration itself, in language that in no way changed the terms of the surrender⁽⁶⁾. But the Badoglio government continued to pursue the objective of bringing Italy into the United Nations coalition as a means of shaking off the status of a defeated country. After seeking, in vain, to accede to the Atlantic Charter on 17 December 1943⁽⁷⁾, Badoglio reiterated the request to join the Alliance : the first time was to Roosevelt through the intelligence services on 27 January 1944⁽⁸⁾, but since the US President had replied that it would only be possible to consider it once the Italian government included the antifascist political forces⁽⁹⁾, he repeated it on 3 April 1944, announcing that his last ministerial post had been filled and included members of Italy’s main political forces⁽¹⁰⁾. Lastly, he tried again through Intelligence Service channels by sending Professor Pozzi on a mission to Roosevelt, to deliver his third letter dated 24 April 1944⁽¹¹⁾.

It should not, however, be thought that the idea of allying Italy with the United Nations coalition was peculiar to the king and Badoglio, because after the removal of Victor Emanuel III with the Lieutenancy of his son, and the installation of a government that was

⁽³⁾ *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1943 : The Conferences at Washington and Quebec*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1970, p. 1071.

⁽⁴⁾ PIETO PASTORELLI, *Dalla prima alla seconda guerra mondiale : Momenti e problemi della politica estera italiana 1914-1943*. Milano, LED, 1997, cap. IX : *La Acobelligeranza*.

⁽⁵⁾ Harold Macmillan, *War Diaries : Politics and War in the Mediterranean, 1943-1945*. London, Macmillan 1984, pp. 222-223

⁽⁶⁾ It should be recalled that the declaration of war on Germany on 13 October 1943 was also without value.

⁽⁷⁾ Badoglio to Joyce, 17 December 1943, in *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani*, serie decima, vol. I. Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992, D. 101.

⁽⁸⁾ Badoglio to Roosevelt, 27 January 1944, *ivi*, D. 127.

⁽⁹⁾ Roosevelt to Badoglio, 21 February 1944, *ivi*, D. 141.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Badoglio to Roosevelt, 3 April 1944, *ivi*, D. 187

⁽¹¹⁾ Badoglio to Roosevelt, 24 April 1944, *ivi*, D. 205

more representative of the antifascist forces under the prime ministership of Bonomi, the latter put the same request to the American government on 2 July 1944 ⁽¹²⁾ ; and since the reply that arrived on 4 September evaded the issue, but spoke of the possibility of amending the text of the unconditional surrender of 29 September 1943 ⁽¹³⁾, this point was immediately seized upon to propose an agreement to replace it, such that Article 1, noting Italy's endorsement of the United Nations declaration on January 1942 –that is to say, the document instituting the United Nations coalition - implied recognition of Italy as an ally ⁽¹⁴⁾. Since the discussions on this issue continued inconclusively, and the coalition was by now being replaced by the establishment of the United Nations Organization, Italy decided to apply for UN membership. After being sounded out beforehand, the United States said that it had already raised the issue at the Yalta Conference but that nothing had been done because of opposition from the British, and the response of the Soviets who had said that if Italy could be admitted on the grounds of co-belligerence, so should Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.⁽¹⁵⁾

Attempts were then made to secure membership as observers, relying on the special nature of the Italian case : the earliest co-belligerent, the greatest contributor to the common cause, the diplomatic status of Italian representatives in Moscow and Washington and the fact that Italy was the largest country in the category of co-belligerents ⁽¹⁶⁾. The State Department replied that the current institution of the United Nations Organization made no provision for observers ⁽¹⁷⁾. But there was such a strong belief in, and insistence on, this special character of Italy, that on 26 April 1945 at the opening of the San Francisco Conference, the Italian government sent a declaration to all the delegations expressing “*deep disappointment at the exclusion of democratic Italy*” from the Conference, and claiming the right to participate ⁽¹⁸⁾.

But in order to obtain the yearned-for status of ally, Italy played another card – the declaration of war on Japan, hoping that this would have a better outcome than the declaration of war on Germany in October 1943 ⁽¹⁹⁾. And an American Undersecretary did, in fact, draw up a statement for the Potsdam Conference which said, “*The Govt of the US is convinced time has come to recognize new democratic Italy –allied with UNations in war against Germany and now in war against Japan- as member of family of nations*” and that the US therefore

⁽¹²⁾ Bonomi to Roosevelt, 2 July 1944, *ivi*, D. 282

⁽¹³⁾ Roosevelt to Bonomi, 25 August 1944, *ivi*, D. 369

⁽¹⁴⁾ Prunas to Kirk, 26 September 1944, *ivi*, D. 430

⁽¹⁵⁾ Tarchiani to De Gasperi, 8 March 1945, in *I Documenti diplomatici Italiani*, vol. II Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1992, D. 85

⁽¹⁶⁾ Tarchiani to De Gasperi, 22 March 1945, *ivi*, D. 103

⁽¹⁷⁾ Tarchiani to De Gasperi, 13 April 1945, *ivi*, D. 124

⁽¹⁸⁾ De Gasperi to Tarchiani, 26 April 1945, *ivi*, D. 150

⁽¹⁹⁾ De Gasperi to Tarchiani, 13 July 1945, *ivi*, D. 332

intended to support Italy's accession to the world security organization ⁽²⁰⁾. And it was actually Truman who put the proposal to Churchill and Stalin at the first session of the Conference⁽²¹⁾. The matter was discussed on several occasions : the other two Powers did not oppose the idea, but Churchill set the condition that Italy's admission should only take place after concluding a peace treaty, and Stalin required this to be done simultaneously with the admission of the other "co-belligerents" ⁽²²⁾. The agreement between the three Powers was therefore achieved on the basis of the ninth point of the final protocol on the deliberations of the Conference which stated, "*The conclusion of such a Peace Treaty with a recognised and democratic Italian Government will make it possible for the Three Governments to fulfil their desire to support an application from Italy for membership of the United Nations...*" ⁽²³⁾. The three Powers also undertook the same commitment to Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary and Romania, albeit in less emphatic language. The only acknowledgement that Italy was a special case was the statement that Italy's peace treaty would be one of the first tasks to be addressed by the newly instituted Council of Foreign Ministers. This recognition appeared extremely important to the Italian government, because the Italian government had only been officially notified of the part of the Potsdam protocol that related to Italy ⁽²⁴⁾, and not the whole of the text of point 9, with the result that Rome was not fully aware of the fact that, following the peace treaty, Italy's accession to the United Nations organization would take place together with the other German satellite states.

The Potsdam formula was set out in the preamble to the peace treaty would enable the allied Powers to support Italy's application to join the United Nations Organization ⁽²⁵⁾. Even before it was signed, the United States sounded out the British and the Soviets to see whether they were favourable towards Italy's immediate accession ⁽²⁶⁾. Bevin replied that it was not appropriate to do so before signing the treaty, and Gromyko stated his readiness to move beyond the provisions of the Potsdam protocol for all the countries envisaged there ⁽²⁷⁾

In conclusion, at the end of this first phase, the results were extremely modest : promises by the four powers to support Italy's accession to the United Nations organization, subject to the

⁽²⁰⁾ Grew to Byrnes, 16 July 1945, in FRUS, *The Conference of Berlin 1945*, vol. II, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1960,D723

⁽²¹⁾ First plenary meeting, 17 luglio 1945, ivi, pp. 53 e 60; *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, series I, vol. I, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1984, p. 342

⁽²²⁾ The discussion took place in the plenary sessions on 24, 28 and 31 July 1945; see the records: FRUS, *The Conference de Berlin*, vol. II, pp. 357-366 and 370-372, 461-463 and 467-469, 520 and 535; *Documents on B.P.O.*, series I, vol. I pp. 646-651, 960-962, 1080-1081

⁽²³⁾ FRUS, *The Conference of Berlin*, vol. II, pp. 1492-1493 and *Documents on B.P.O.*, series I, vol. I, pp. 1273-1274

⁽²⁴⁾ Charles to De Gasperi, 3 August 1945 in DDI, serie decima, vol. II, D. 381

⁽²⁵⁾ MINISTERO DEGLI AFFARI ESTERI, *Trattati e Convenzioni fra l'Italia e gli altri Stati*, vol. 61, Roma, Tip. Ris. MAE, 1965, p. 27

⁽²⁶⁾ Acheson to Johnson, 26 and 28 June 1946, in FRUS, 1946, vol. I: General; *The United Nations*, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1972, pp. 397-398

⁽²⁷⁾ Bevin to Byrnes, 1 July 1946 and Johnson Byrnes, 3 July 1946, ivi, pp. 403-404 and 404-406

political proviso that this would take place simultaneously with the accession of the other former satellites of Germany and at the moment that Italy accepted the peace treaty. But Italy's attempt to become an ally of the United Nations in war, as a means of wiping out the military defeat, was not accepted, and nor, was the alter and more comprehensive plan to prevent the new democratic Italy from having to pay for the evils of Fascism. That was unacceptable to the victors : Italy was one entity, and it became democratic after signing the peace treaty, and hence after making up for all the turmoil in the international order for which it was responsible, it could be fully readmitted to the international concert of nations. This idea, as Di Nolfo ⁽²⁸⁾ has already pointed out, was very difficult for the Italian political world to understand, and indeed one might say that in time it was endured, rather than accepted. However the conviction remained unshaken that overcoming Italy's defeat at the international level was at least linked to the United Nations even though the UN had not helped to wipe it out and avoid the repercussions.

After signing the peace treaty, the Italian government believed that the moment had finally come to accede to the United Nations organization. On 19 May 1947 it submitted the official application for admission, without waiting until the British condition had been met for the entry into force of the treaty. It was obviously felt that when the Security Council examined the application, that condition would already be in place. Adequate account, however, had not been taken of the political proviso laid down by the Soviets, either because of a lack of information about the real intentions of Moscow and Washington regarding the problem of the simultaneous admission of the signatory states of the peace treaties, or because of the conviction that Italy's position was essentially different from that of Finland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria by virtue of the special nature of the Italian case, in which Italy continued to believe. Prior consultation with the American government did not help to clarify ideas, because the United States merely declared that they would lend their full support to the Italian application ⁽²⁹⁾. One thing is certain: in the course of the debate at the constituent assembly to ratify the peace treaty at the end of July, Sforza vigorously argued, among the points in favour of so doing, that ratification would give Italy the best credentials for establishing her right to enter the UN ⁽³⁰⁾.

⁽²⁸⁾ ENNIO DI NOLFO, *La Formazione della politica estera italiana negli anni della nascita dei blocchi. In L'Italia e la politica di potenza in Europa (1945-1950)*, Milano, Marzorati, 1990, p. 604

⁽²⁹⁾ Acheson to Marshall, 9 April 1947, in *FRUS*, 1947, vol. III : *The British Commonwealth, Europe*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1972, p. 536

⁽³⁰⁾ CARLO SFORZA, *Cinque anni a Palazzo Chigi : La politica estera italiana dal 1947 al 1951*. Roma, Atlante, 1952, pp. 23-28

There were also two other fundamental reasons for steadfastly seeking membership of the United Nations, in addition to a conviction that this was a commitment that the four Powers has entered into : to shake off the status of a defeated country, and to become fully incorporated into the international community, and the hope that within the UN it would be possible to work for the “policy for the revision” of the treaty which had been announced by Nenni in October 1946 when he became foreign minister. From the time the application had been submitted, very intense and detailed consultations had been held with friendly states and Latin America, regarding the applicability and the interpretation of articles 53 and 107 of the Charter which discriminated against the former enemy states in the Second World War, with the intention of making it clear that these articles could not apply to Italy. With regard to the second reason, Italy encouraged an initiative which, once again, came from Latin America, to raise proposals for a revision of the peace treaty in the General Assembly, on the assumption that the United Nations Charter had a similar clause to article 18 of the League of Nations Charter ⁽³¹⁾. It was only in December 1947 that it became clear that this clause did not exist : but the UN could have done something more regarding this revision, because it was within the powers of the General Assembly, one year after the entry into force of the peace treaty, to table proposals on the final destiny of the colonies, which the great Powers undertook to endorse.

When it became evident from the preliminary discussions on the Security Council that the Soviet and American positions regarding their erstwhile enemies were irreconcilable, with the United States maintaining that Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria did not meet the requirements for admission to the United Nations because of the nature of their governments, the Italian government made a feeble attempt to induce the United Nations to accept a blanket admission, that is to say, to admit all the countries that had applied⁽³²⁾. But faced with the determined opposition of America, Italy did not insist on this any further, even though she continued to emphasised the importance of the question ⁽³³⁾. The Soviet veto was raised on 1 October, blocking the favourable opinion of the General Assembly. And the matter was closed as far as the 1947 session was concerned.

⁽³¹⁾ The documentation is in *DDI*, serie decima, vol. VI. Roma Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca della Stato 1997

⁽³²⁾ Memorandum of conversation Lovett-Tarchiani, 15 August 1947, in *FRUS*, 1947, vol. I : *General ; The United Nations*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1973, pp. 249-251 and Tarchiani to Sforza, 15 August 1947, in *DDI*, serie decima, vol. VI, D. 333

⁽³³⁾ Memorandum of conversation Lovett-Tarchiani, 28 August 1947, and Memorandum of conversation Armour-Tarchiani, 11 September 1947, in *FRUS*, 1947, vol. III, pp. 957-959 and 965-967 ; Tarchiani to Sforza, 28 August and 11 September 1947, in *DDI*, serie decima, vol. VI, DD. 389 and 446

The discovery that the United Nations organization was not competent to revise the peace treaty, the participation on an equal footing in the important European negotiations as a result of the offer of Secretary of State Marshall, and even more so Bevin's subsequent invitation to the "new" Italy eventually to become a member of the Western Union, the split between the East and the West which occurred, also officially, in the latter part of 1947, the prospects of the important general election on 18 April 1948, shifted the attention of the Italian government away from the problem of the United Nations. If it had depended on Italy, it would have been a long time before the question was raised again. But in 1948, it once again came to the fore. And it was the United States that brought it up. On the eve of the general election, the Department of State had the idea that, in addition to the initiative for the Free Territory of Trieste (which was to lead to the tripartite declaration of 20 March) it might have helped the consultation to end with a pro-West outcome if the British-Franco-American proposal for Italy's admission to the United Nations could be proposed once again at the special session that was to be held in the spring to deal with the question of Palestine⁽³⁴⁾. It was not that the United States were now willing to accept the Soviet idea of bringing all the former enemy countries into the UN *en bloc* : they expected a new Soviet veto, but it was precisely this veto that they believed could be used to their electoral benefit. After consultations with the French and British – and it was the British in particular that raised many objections because they did not consider that the Soviets would allow themselves to be used so easily considering the delicate position of the United States in this regard⁽³⁵⁾ Lastly, the Italian government was sounded out⁽³⁶⁾. Sforza was not very enthusiastic, and said that Italian public opinion did not consider UN membership to be an essential requirement for improving the country's international status : he did not therefore feel that a second move, following Trieste, was necessary⁽³⁷⁾. He then pointed out that support for United Nations accession would obviously be welcomed, but that it was necessary to space it out more⁽³⁸⁾. The United States nevertheless moved ahead, taking France and the United Kingdom along with it⁽³⁹⁾. The problem was raised once again on the Security Council on 10 April ; the American delegate read his statement and the Soviets, as predicted, placed their veto on it and

⁽³⁴⁾ Marshall to Austin, 12 marzo 1948, in *FRUS*, 1948, vol. I : *General : The United Nations*, Part. I. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1975, pp. 173-174

⁽³⁵⁾ Caffery to Marshall, 15 and 17 March 1948 ; Gallman to Marshall, 16, 18 and 23 March 1948, *ivi*, pp. 176 and 179; 176-177, 179-180 and 183-184.

⁽³⁶⁾ Marshall at Dunn, 25 March 1948, *ivi*, p. 184 and Tarchiani to Sforza, 26 March 1948, in *DDI*, serie decima, vol. VII. Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2000, D. 488

⁽³⁷⁾ Dunn to Marshall, 26 March 1948, in *FRUS*, 1948, vol. I, pp. 185-186.

⁽³⁸⁾ Dunn to Marshall, 28 March 1948, *ivi*, p. 186 and Sforza to Tarchiani, 27 March 1948, in *DDI*, serie decima, vol. VII, D. 492

⁽³⁹⁾ Lovett to Austin, 8 April 1948, in *FRUS*, 1948, vol. I, pp. 192-194

the result of the re-examination of the outstanding applications ended with a vote in favour of the accession of Burma ! Given the short interval that remained, the question was not even raised as an electoral issue.

But the issue dragged on for another next two years without any pressure from Italy. In 1949, on 13 September, there was a further Soviet veto ⁽⁴⁰⁾, and in 1950 Italy suggested taking advantage of the absence of the Soviet delegate to once again examine the Italian application, but the United States refused to go along with it ⁽⁴¹⁾. Interest in United Nations membership remained, but it was now purely a generic interest, no longer motivated by the specific reasons that had existed in 1947. Italy's international situation had now changed radically as a result of the two decisions taken by the government in 1949 : the European option, under which Italy took part in setting up the Council of Europe on 5 May, and the even more important decision –the Atlantic option- which took Italy into the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation on 4 April, as an ally of 10 countries from the former of the United Nations War coalition. These new ties, moreover, would be more useful to enable the United Nations to resolve the problem of the colonies, and –hopefully- Trieste, as well. This was what Sforza at least had at heart, and for a time perhaps De Gasperi, too. At least nothing is known of any dissension in this regard, or of any initiatives relating to United Nations membership.

De Gaspari, however, continued to think about the question : the records make it clear that his particular concern was with the moral aspect of Italy's rehabilitation which would be sanctioned by taking part in the great international forum of the victors. Indeed, one might say that he considered this to be a personal debt that the victors had to discharge to him personally, honouring their commitment to support Italy's accession to the United Nations set out in the preamble to the peace treaty – almost as a form of remuneration for that signature that had cost so much soul-searching. And this gave rise to the third phase of the problem, that opened formally with a letter sent by Sforza to Schuman on 4 February 1951, just after the Italo-French meeting at Santa Margherita Ligure, that was to set the negotiations for the European Defence Community in motion. Sforza wrote, *“I think that we should be able to say, in a more solemn manner than in the past, that the Allies are committed to making all the necessary efforts to ensure that Italy is no longer deprived for a long time of her right to membership of the supreme organization from which she has been excluded so far,*

⁽⁴⁰⁾ On the US position : U.S. Delegation Position Paper, 22 October 1949, in *FRUS*, 1949, vol. II : *The United Nations ; The Western Hemisphere*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1975, pp. 301-307.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Memorandum of conversation Hickerson-Tarchiani, 13 July 1950, in *FRUS*, 1950, vol. II : *The United Nations ; The Western Hemisphere*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1976, pp. 104-105.

specifically in violation of both the letter and the spirit of the peace treaty"⁽⁴²⁾. This letter was also sent to Bevin and Acheson and recalled that the Italian government was now being accused of deceiving the country in the debate on the ratification of the peace treaty.

Sforza left the Foreign Ministry in July, and was succeeded by De Gasperi himself, as at the time of the preparation for the peace. The opportunity for dealing fully with this question was provided by De Gasperi's visit to the United States in September. The discussions were based on a long memorandum⁽⁴³⁾ in which, from a re-examination of all the declarations made in previous debates, two conclusions were drawn : the first was that the Soviet veto was illegal because the USSR had always recognized that Italy met the necessary requirements for admission to the United Nations organization : the second was that Italy's position differed from that of other former enemies, because they had not been given similar unanimous recognition. These gave rise to the proposal to circumvent the Soviet veto by tabling a resolution before the General Assembly, supported by the consultative opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in The Hague on 3 March 1950, on which the conclusions were based, declaring acceptance of the Italian application. If carried by the General Assembly with a two-thirds majority, this resolution would have had the effect of making up for the lack of action by the Security Council on the basis of the "united action for peace" resolution that had been adopted a year earlier.

Italian lawyers had been working very hard to provide the government with an instrument that at least appeared to be appropriate to achieve admission without requiring the Soviet Union or the United States to go back on their respective positions. But in discussions at the State Department, Acheson was not convinced of the soundness of the idea : he was much more inclined to use the argument, when the question was raised once again on the Security Council, that Italy's case was a wholly special one, because the United Nations had given Italy the trusteeship of Somalia⁽⁴⁴⁾. The discussion continued through the diplomatic channels. De Gasperi insisted on the proposal in a personal letter to Acheson⁽⁴⁵⁾, receiving the terse reply that the United States would act on Italy's behalf, but "*under the Charter*"⁽⁴⁶⁾ and making it clear to the representative to the United Nations that "*USG will not agree to any 'deal' involving admission of satellites in return for admission of Italy. USG will seek to*

⁽⁴²⁾ Sforza to Schuman, 5 February 1951, in SFORZA, *op. cit.*, pp 435-441

⁽⁴³⁾ Text published in *FRUS*, 1951, vol. II : *The United Nations : The Western Hemisphere*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1979, pp. 335-341

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Minutes of Meeting Acheson-De Gasperi, 24 September 1951, *ivi*, pp. 347-348

⁽⁴⁵⁾ De Gasperi to Acheson, 23 October 1951, *ivi*, pp. 365-366

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Webb to De Gasperi, 30 October 1951, *ivi*, p. 367

discourage any effort to obtain Ital admission by non-Charter means, i.e. by GA without SC recommendation ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

In 1952 the Italian government once again reiterated the importance of UN admission, looking ahead to the forth coming general election, because the issue was now a matter of public controversy, with the opposition emphasizing that Italy's failure to gain admission was not so much due to the well-known Soviet veto, but essentially to an American veto ⁽⁴⁸⁾. The United States therefore tried to think of some intermediate form of participation such as an "interim partnership" or "associate membership", but Italy made it clear that she was interested only in "full membership", deeming any other solution "humiliating" and contrary to the undertakings in the peace treaty ⁽⁴⁹⁾. Finally, the Observer to the United Nations, Guidotti, officially notified the State Department that "*his government does not intend at present to press actively any further steps to obtain Italy's admission to the United Nations*"⁽⁵⁰⁾. This was on 9 April 1953. Two months later, the elections brought to an end the long period of governments under De Gasperi. Among the other thorny issues that remained to be settled was the fact that he had failed in his intention to overcome Italy's status as a former defeated country by achieving the much yearned-for admission to the United Nations.

The fourth and final phase began two years later in 1955, and for what were largely different reasons, just as the Italian domestic situation and the international situation was different by that time. Italy was now in the age of competitive coexistence, which was the new kind of cold war against Stalin's successors, and by now it was the so-called "Geneva spirit" that seemed to underlie relations between the two blocs. In this climate, but for other reasons, the Soviets had changed their attitude regarding the Austrian issue, making it possible on 15 May 1955 to conclude the Austrian State Treaty, as the peace treaty was called, with that part of Hitler's Reich that the Big Four had pledged to restore to independence. Austria now qualified for admission to the United Nations and would accede as soon as possible. But this posed a political problem to Italy, which saw her United Nations membership being overtaken by her northern neighbour which by whatever name it might be used, was also a former defeated enemy, but unlike the other countries in that class it had not joined any military alliances but was bound to neutrality. The opposition had an easy time

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Acheson to Austin, 15 December 1951, *ivi*, p. 410

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Memorandum Hickerson, 30 January 1952, *ivi*, pp. 449-150

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Acheson to Austin, 3 December 1952, in *FRUS*, 1952-1954, vol. III : *United Nations Affairs*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1979, p. 881

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Memorandum of conversation Lodge-Guidotti, 9 April 1953, *ivi*, pp. 938-939

attacking the government coalition : it was neutrality that gave admittance to the United Nations, which was currently being revitalized ; whereas joining alliances led to exclusion from it. But since Austria was a neighbouring country, the government coalition itself was also very sensitive, for reasons of prestige, not to endure the humiliation of being overtaken by the Austrians. Admission to the United Nations had also been one of the issues on which the slow, and still uncertain, progress towards bringing the Socialist party into the government coalition had been based; for the Socialists, there was absolutely no reason for the United States to display hostility towards the countries of Eastern Europe, with the result that their attitude was taken to be tantamount to a veto on admission. Moreover, admission to the United Nations took on a new international political value considering the ongoing revival of its activities through various initiatives, of which one of the most important was the process of becoming the forum for the disarmament negotiations: Italy's exclusion from these negotiations involved foreign, international and domestic policy aspects. Lastly, it was impossible to ignore the presence of the United Nations at a time when developments in the international situation were beginning to establish the idea of the universal character of the United Nations Organization.

With all these considerations in mind, Italy decided to resume the formalities to apply for membership of the United Nations at a time when the first rumours began the rounds of a Canadian initiative to overcome the Soviet veto that was blocking the accession of 14 states, in the form of a "package deal". In practice, under this deal, the United States would lift its hostility towards the Communist countries in exchange for the admission of a much larger number of countries belonging to its own area. In short, the Americans were being asked to sacrifice their principled position regarding new accessions in order to obtain a substantial enlargement of Western influence within the organization.

Before the United States had time to overcome their doubts over this proposition, the Italian government under Prime Minister Antonio Segni, and with the Liberal MP Gaetano Martino as his Foreign Minister, took the first step on 20 June 1955 by instructing the Italian Ambassador in Washington "*not to take any initiative*", but to warn the State Department that "*admitting other States without Italy would prove disastrous* –an "*ambiguous*" telegram, as Ortona called it ⁽⁵¹⁾. Minister Martino spoke much more candidly in his address to the Chamber of Deputies on 27 September, once again emphasizing Italy's right and wish to join

⁽⁵¹⁾ ORTONA, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 142

the United Nations ⁽⁵²⁾. The matter was taken up directly with Secretary of State Dulles on his visit to Rome on 23 October. But Dulles was not very responsive to Italian pressure from the Prime Minister, and merely replied that the United States was opposed to the package deal because every State had to be appraised individually, but he did indicate the new stance that the United States was now thinking of adopting : the members of the Security Council would refrain from vetoing the new admissions ⁽⁵³⁾. This was a compromise that Dulles found very difficult to accept, and which he only bowed to under pressure from President Eisenhower, whose arguments were also influenced by the Italian case with which he had been familiar from the beginning, even though there is no evidence that this was decisive to his decision ⁽⁵⁴⁾. The last time the Italian government brought pressure to bear was to prevent the United States from voting on the package deal, by submitting procedural proposals to Washington that would allow the United States to appear to be in favour of Italy's admission, without changing its stance ⁽⁵⁵⁾.

In the tumultuous voting on the Security Council and at the General Assembly, the “package deal”, was eventually adopted, and 16 countries, including Italy, joined the United Nations organization on 14 December 1955 ⁽⁵⁶⁾.

The event of which –as I said at the beginning- there are few traces in the history books, was warmly welcomed in Italy at the time, but it was also the target of criticism. The fact that Italy had entered the organization with 15 other countries as a result of a compromise that did away with the special nature of the Italian case based on Italy's particular merits and rights caused particular displeasure in some quarters. But in reality, as we have seen, in reality Italy had no merits and no rights. Italy had never become a member of the United Nations war coalition: the 15 October 1943 declaration of war on Germany was without any value, as was the later declaration of war on Japan on 15 July 1945, as was the so-called “cobelligerence”, even though here are traces of the first in the third of these in the Preamble to the Peace Treaty. As far as the right to be admitted among the first of the defeated nations was concerned, this priority in the Potsdam declaration only referred to the drafting of the Treaty and not to admission to the United Nations, for which the five countries considered in the declaration were all put on the same plane, just as they were subsequently in the Preambles to

⁽⁵²⁾ GAETANO MARTINO, *Discorsi parlamentari*. Roma, Grafica Editrice Romana, 1977 : vol. II, pp. 563-564, but it is also noted in the Memorandum Merchant, 30 September 1955, in *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. XI : *United Nations and General International Matters*. Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1988, D. 127

⁽⁵³⁾ Minute in *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. XXVII : *Western Europe and Canada*. Washington , United States Government Printing Office, 1992 D. 90

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Hoover to Dulles, 5 November 1955, in *FRUS*, 1955-1957, vol. XI, D. 143

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Memorandum of conversation Dulles-Brosio, 6 December 1955, *ivi*, D. 204 ; ORTONA, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p .144

⁽⁵⁶⁾ *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1955. New York, United Nations Department of Public Information, 1956, pp. 22-29

each of the five Peace Treaties with regard to the commitment of the Big Four to support the admission to the United Nations of each of them. And the same commitment also appeared in the Austrian State Treaty. Italy could not therefore lay claim to any preferential right, and could not therefore complain at being part of the group of medium and small states that were entering the United Nations to make a contribution towards achieving its institutional purposes that each one of them was able to. It must, however, be recalled that there was inevitably a sense of regret, due to the conviction that the new democratic Italy was a quasi-Ally of the victors, as Quaroni astutely noticed as early as January 1946⁽⁵⁷⁾. On the other hand, the feeling of satisfaction was also exaggerated and out of proportion, because no one could properly claim this to have been an Italian foreign policy success. Despite the commitment of many states, Italy's UN membership was not the direct result of some well-coordinated policy, but was to meet a need, achieved because of a favourable international situation that Italy was able to exploit to obtain direct and indirect support from various friends in the small circle of European countries of the day and within the broader framework of the Atlantic Alliance. When Italy's admission to the United Nations –and even earlier to the War coalition- had been pursued as a political solution to Italy's specific problems, it had been an unmitigated failure.

Although this issue is of little importance, it is nevertheless a page in Italian foreign policy that does deserve to be remembered because of its direct linkage with the crisis in Italian history brought about by the Second World War.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Quaroni to De Gasperi, 5 January 1946, in *DDI*, serie decima, vol. III. Roma. Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1993, p. 75