

Mediterranean Solidarity. International Aid between Southern European Countries (1945–1990)

Edited by Grazia Sciacchitano. With contributions by Ana Guardiã, Ruth Nattermann, Elena Serina, Silvia Salvatici, Kalliopi Geronymaki e Francesca Rolandi

Grazia Sciacchitano

A Different Perspective: Narrating from the South¹

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The history of humanitarianism is a rising field of research. A growing number of studies have analysed aid programmes aimed at different geographical regions affected by various humanitarian crises, including armed conflicts, natural disasters and severe economic distress². However, studies on the

role of donors other than those in northern Europe and the United States are limited. As has happened in other fields of research³, the dualism between a wealthy North versus a backward South has restricted the range of investigations considered to be of possible historical relevance⁴. Hence, countries in

¹ This forum presents the results of the *HumanEuroMed, Mediterranean Solidarity. International Aid between Southern European Countries (1945-1990)* international workshop held in Florence on 30 May 2023. The workshop was organized by the University of Florence and the German Historical Institute in Rome in the framework of the *HumanEuroMed–Humanitarianism and Mediterranean Europe. A Transnational and Comparative History (1945-1990)* project funded by the European Research Council under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Grant Agreement 101019166).

² E. Davey, *Humanitarian History in a Complex World*, Hpg Policy Brief, London, Overseas Development Institute, 2014; M. Hilton, E. Baughan, E. Davey, B. Everill, K. O'Sullivan, T. Sasson, *History and Humanitarianism: A Conversation*, «Past & Present», 2018, 241, 1; S. Salvatici, *L'umanitarismo internazionale: una storia di lungo periodo*, «Il mestiere di storico», 2019, XI, 2.

³ This is the case of global history, see J. Luengo, P. Dalmau, *Writing Spanish History in the Global Age: Connections and Entanglements in the Nineteenth Century*, «Journal of Global History», 2018, 12, 3.

⁴ I borrow the concept of North-South dualism from the revisionist debate which has challenged the established understanding of southern Italian history since the late 1980s. See the debates published in the

southern Europe have been examined primarily as recipients of aid, and the act of receiving aid has often been considered a passive one. To challenge this perspective and uncover new research paths, we have brought together authors who focus on the role that humanitarianism has played in the relationships between southern European countries. The contributions collected in this forum address an array of case studies spanning from the aftermath of World War II to the Seventies. The investigations examine international aid programmes that were implemented during specific critical circumstances, while assessing the political, economic and cultural factors that contributed to shaping intra-southern European solidarity.

The intra-southern European perspective enables the identification of regional patterns and facilitates comparisons between countries, revealing larger processes, networks and similarities. From a methodological point of view, all of our forum authors have adopted a specific approach, shifting the observation scale within the chosen country(ies) and paying close attention to the agency of the different players, whether donors or recipients. The forum looks at the actions and interactions of national and regional authorities, inter-governmental organizations, professional associations, religious institutions and voluntary agencies.

Altogether, the contributors demonstrate that cultural, political, economic and reli-

gious links between nations have played a role in shaping intra-southern European aid, which has taken on specific characteristics in different conjunctures and circumstances. After World War II, the Portuguese authorities invoked «sentimental ties» behind their donations to Italy, recalling the past alliance between the Portuguese and Italian dictatorships (Guardião). The Italian head of *Caritas* evoked religious ties and a «guarantee of similar thought» as the foundation for the relationship with his Spanish and Portuguese counterparts (Serina). The case of Yugoslav aid to Italy after the 1976 earthquake in the northeastern region of Friuli reveals the relevance of «territorial ties». The Yugoslav authorities presented humanitarian aid as a means of promoting «good neighbourly relations». However, there was an additional tie, which played on national identity and connected the Republic of Slovenia to the Slovenian ethnic minority living in Italy (Rolandi). The case of Yugoslav and Slovenian aid to Friuli shows how aid can result from connections between states but also between regions within nation-state boundaries. Italian aid to Greece offers additional evidence of this. The economic similarities between southern Italy and Greece provided the basis for the establishment of an international network of experts. Their long-term amicable and professional cooperation led Italy to support the Greek development plan in 1960 in the name of «special cooperative ties» (Salvatici).

journal «Meridiana. Rivista di storia e scienze sociali»; for example, the «Mercati» issue (no. 1, September 1987), pp. 9-15. In English, see among others J. Morris, *Challenging Meridionalismo. Constructing a New History for Southern Italy*; in R. Lumley, J. Morris, *The New History of the Italian South. The Mezzogiorno Revisited*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 1997 pp. 1-19.

Religious, national and sentimental elements linked intra-southern European aid to a symbolic European space that transcended geography and included scattered diaspora communities. This was the case of the solidarity activated by the transnational Jewish networks operating between Italy and Palestine after World War II. The solidarity stemmed from «sentimental ties» as well as from the cultural heritage embodied in the Sephardic origin of a notable fraction of Italian Jews (Nattermann). Similarly, the Greek diaspora in the Usa and Australia played a central role in financially supporting Greek Cypriots after the Turkish invasion in 1974. The Greek and Cypriot authorities called for international support, evoking the cultural and historical ties of the transnational Hellenic community (Geronymaki).

The contributions outline a broad Mediterranean region within which multidirectional aid flows emerge. Francesca Rolandi notes that aid has «moved westwards», as with Yugoslavian relief to Italy. Aid has been delivered by countries considered to be economically disadvantaged, as in the case of Portugal's relief operations in postwar Italy investigated by Anna Guardião. It has circulated between socioeconomically similar areas, as Silvia Salvatici's case study demonstrates. Kalliopi Geronymaki and Ruth Nattermann show how aid has flowed through global diasporic communities and converged into southern European programmes. Elena Serina examines the emergence of a Catholic humanitarian network in postwar southern Europe. The intra-Mediterranean perspective thus reveals a complex, horizontal dimension of aid, visible through links connecting different actors in specific historical

contexts. This forum challenges the idea that aid revolves around the vertical relationship between major donor countries, international organizations and recipient countries in the Global South alone.

The focus on the agency of aid-receiving countries leads the authors of this forum to question the notion that accepting aid is an inherently passive act. Salvatici demonstrates the active role played by Italy and Greece as beneficiaries within the context of the Organisation for European Co-operation and Development's (Oecd) programmes. Both countries not only participated in the Oecd development plan but also established independent, long-term cooperation beyond the Oecd framework. Similarly, Rolandi shows that Italy played an active role in deciding the allocation of Yugoslav aid following the Friuli earthquake. More generally, the case studies collected in this forum complicate the way we approach the relations between donor and recipient countries, challenging the idea of a purely hierarchical linkage. The provision of aid and establishment of international cooperation networks have been based on mutual convenience and/or on the pursuit of common interests and goals between the parties. Reciprocal economic interests can be observed in several cases. In the aftermath of World War II, Salazar's Portugal aimed to maintain previous positive relations with Italy for the benefit of the national economy and the country's international standing. The Yugoslav aid programme for Friuli after the 1976 earthquake sought to establish economic opportunities for national companies in the border region. Similarly, in the 1960s, Italy granted

aid to Greece without any official obligation on the part of the recipient, and Greece increased its imports from Italy as a result. Also, shared cultural and religious interests have played a role in shaping the relationship between the different actors. The international network of the Spanish, Italian and Portuguese *Caritas* had the common aim of re-Christianizing postwar Europe and countering the dominance of state aid over Catholic relief. The identity shared by the humanitarian actors and beneficiaries was at the heart of the aid provided by the Greek international community to Cyprus, much like the refugee assistance provided by Jewish agencies after World War II. Ultimately, Guardião's contribution demonstrates how even small donors can wield negotiating power in their interactions with international organizations. This was the case of Portugal's response to the request for donations from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Portugal negotiated a smaller contribution than was initially requested and pushed for autonomy in selecting the recipient country.

In conclusion, the analysis of different case studies has revealed a multitude of

links and relationships, encompassing the common as well as specific features of the countries under examination. The case studies have demonstrated the active role southern European countries have played both as donors and recipients, how they have contributed to shaping the international agencies' programmes, enjoyed autonomous spaces for action and established transnational humanitarian networks. The wide range of case studies challenges the notion of southern European countries as passive recipients of relief, instead revealing patterns of intra-Mediterranean aid based on mutually beneficial cooperation. The authors' findings demonstrate the importance of bringing «minor actors» into the analytical framework, as well as the usefulness of adopting inclusive paradigms of investigation to achieve a more multifaceted understanding of historical events. Finally, the forum opens new avenues of research and offers fresh insights into the histories of southern European countries and the contemporary regime of international aid. As such, it also seeks to reassess the role of Mediterranean Europe in the broader history of global humanitarian dynamics.

Grazia Sciacchitano, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali. Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet (Ntnu) Institutt for moderne samfunnshistorie, Edv. Bulls, b. 1, 7491 Trondheim.

grazia.sciacchitano@unifi.it

Orcid: 0000-0002-4405-4364

Evoking «Sentimental and Economic Ties» and Reshaping (Geo)Political Frameworks: Portugal's Aid to Italy in the Aftermath of World War II

Albeit abundant in recent years, efforts to historicize humanitarianism continue to centre their analysis around what is classically regarded as the western/northern sphere of influence, boxing southern European countries into the framework of aid recipients. This vision often derives from perspectives focused more on the relevance of numbers (donations) and generalized global and regional dynamics, in which southern European countries tend to be neglected or portrayed as having a minor role. Methodological traditions have also contributed to the bias. For example, methodological nationalism has diverted Portuguese historians' attention from the influence of external factors in framing domestic politics, or from the entanglements the comparative, transnational and international lenses bring to the fore, which lead to new questions and introduce new topics for understanding Portuguese contemporaneity. Humanitarian endeavours, the actors involved, and the dynamics and processes that shaped and were shaped by them, among other examples, are a case in point. My contribution focuses on Portuguese aid to Italy in the immediate aftermath of World War II and seeks to situate humanitarianism within Portuguese (re)formulations of intra-Mediterranean solidarities and regional and global politics in that context. It

shows the ways in which the Portuguese authorities framed aid within bilateral, international and transnational relations, and how humanitarianism assisted in the maintenance of cultural, social, political and economic bonds and mutually beneficial associations. Likewise, the aim is to *kaleidoscopically* open up the historicization of the field, that is, to bring an array of motivations, interests and actors frequently lingering in the backstage of historical analyses to the forefront of the discussion. Lastly, this essay demonstrates that aid narratives and policies brought together secular and religious networks and interests and responded to both local contingencies and broader changing dynamics.

Entering the postwar international system

Portuguese aid to Italy in the immediate aftermath of World War II consisted of two donations: one in 1945, the other in 1946. Despite involving different mediators – the first being encouraged by the papacy, the second by an international organization – they were both envisaged to consolidate Italian-Portuguese ties through narratives of intra-Mediterranean solidarity. I will start from the latter to understand Portugal's purposes and the context in which the donations emerged.

This Portuguese donation was concomitantly *sui generis* and paradigmatic for several reasons. It emerged from a request by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (Unrra) to the Portuguese government in June 1946, galvanized by Francis B. Sayre, an American Unrra delegate who had represented the State Department in the agreement that established the organization in 1943¹. Sayre studied Portugal's financial situation, concluded it had benefitted from the country's neutral position in the conflict, and was prepared to request one per cent of Portugal's national income (16 million Usd) in both cash, and resources, as governmental officials had previously offered to sell supplies to Unrra. Regarding the latter, Unrra was interested in raw materials from the Portuguese colonies, such as rice, beans or cottonseed. Nevertheless, in the short hiatus setting the request and the mission apart, the list was extended to feature, for example, other edibles, animals, fishery materials or mineral resources. Yet, Sayre's unilateral approach – he was the one convincing the upper echelons of the organization to go forward with the request – seems peculiar as Portugal was neither a member of Unrra nor the United Nations (Un). It was with surprise that in mid-July Unrra received the Portuguese government's favourable response to Sayre's mission to Lisbon. One week later, the delegate was in Portugal to present his proposal. Urgency was a crucial factor due to

the scarcity of resources to cover the needs of the various populations coming out of the war and Unrra's limited mandate to execute its mission.

Other particularities characterized the negotiation process. Upon arrival, Sayre was encouraged by the British and American ambassadors to significantly reduce the proposal to two million Usd, half in resources, half in cash. The government would not consider a higher donation as the country was also short of supplies. Ultimately, the Portuguese authorities settled for (only) one million Usd in resources, alleging this was the

maximum amount possible and all that the economy of Portugal could stand. The Government felt that given the meagre standard of living and the Portuguese people's acute poverty, the contribution [...] would undoubtedly cause unfavourable comment and protest².

Committing to small contributions was also paradigmatic as, at least during Portugal's authoritarian colonial regime (the *Estado Novo* – 1933-1974), relief donations for various crises in different geographical areas were recurrently symbolic, with the possibility of their disrupting public order persistently claimed as a deterrent factor. Moreover, *humanitarian symbolism* was constantly framed around (geo)political interests.

These interests were reflected in both Unrra's approach and the government's commitment. Under instruction from Un-

¹ H.W. Briggs, *The Unrra Agreement and Congress*, «The American Journal of International Law», 1944, 38, 4.

² United Nations Archives and Records Management Section [Unarms], Non-Member Government – Portugal – Part of Notice of Contribution No. 1005, 23 December 1946, S-0523-0448.

rra higher officials, Sayre was to convince the president of the Council of Ministers, António Oliveira Salazar, that this gesture of goodwill would enable Portugal to rapidly enter the new international order on the side of the winning parties. During their encounter, he stressed:

[T]he fact that Unrra is holding a Council meeting in Geneva beginning next week offers a unique opportunity for Portugal to use the occasion by making before the representatives of the assembled nations a public announcement of a generous contribution. If this was dramatically staged it would bring Portugal to the forefront as one of the nations helping to bring peace to the world and would be a moving manifestation of Portugal's once more taking her rightful place in the councils of the peace-loving nations in helping to meet world problems⁵.

In Salazar's opinion, though, «the real problems to be solved in Europe [were] primarily political and [...] until the political problems [were] solved pouring relief goods into needy countries [was] like trying to fill a bottomless hole»⁴. Nonetheless, Sayre's approach spoke to the Portuguese authorities' «desires», «embarrassments» and «anxieties»⁵.

Hence, the contribution to Unrra must be situated within processes of continuity and change in the immediate aftermath of

World War II. The nature of the regime, the strategies pursued during the war and the adaptation to postwar international dynamics played a role in this equation. At the time, Portugal was applying for Un membership in an effort to internationally safeguard its authoritarian far-right conservative regime after the defeat of Italy and Germany. Its «profitable» wartime neutrality had evolved, after 1942, into a so-called «cooperant neutrality» with the Allied powers, despite keeping up its wolfram exports to feed the Nazi war effort until 1944. The country's commitments with the defeated parties needed to be concealed as the government sought to meet British and American expectations. Allied pressures to soften the Portuguese dictatorship were already present during the years of collaboration with the Allied powers. A partial amnesty for political prisoners, the concession of a freedom of reunion and electoral reform enabling other parties to run for elections in 1945 (on paper only) constituted examples of Portugal's strategies to accommodate international concerns alongside domestic interests. Whereas Portuguese membership of the Un was later vetoed by the Soviet Union, owing to its allegations of collaboration with the Italian and German regimes, it also reflected Salazar's alignment with the West in the emerging Cold War dynamics⁶.

⁵ Unarms, Report by Mr. Francis B. Sayre on Unrra Mission to Portugal, 23 July-3 August 1946, Annex «G», S-0525-0448.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ Unarms, Report by Mr. Francis B. Sayre on Unrra Mission to Portugal, 23 July-3 August 1946, S-0525-0448.

⁶ Portugal was one of the founding members of Nato in 1948. It was admitted as a member of the Un in 1955 during the «pacific coexistence» period between the Usa and the Soviet Union, after the death of Joseph Stalin.

Framing intra-Mediterranean solidarity

Another peculiarity relates to the negotiation process for the donation allocation, which framed the intra-Mediterranean solidarity. The Portuguese authorities argued that its contribution to Unrra's relief effort depended on the recipients. Supplying northern European countries, Poland or Yugoslavia was unacceptable. They insisted on donating to countries with which Portugal had «sentimental» and «economic» ties, and that the recipients should be informed of the resources' provenience⁵. Italy was the chosen destination. Unrra accepted, despite the demand going against the organization's policies – all donations had to be sent to the organization, and the allocation made as seen fit. A press release on the contribution was prominently displayed on the front pages of the Portuguese press, together with Sayre's statement of appreciation. Resources – 2,720 tons of fish in brine, cod liver oil and 80,000 Usd worth of wolfram – were shipped in the first semester of 1947, and allocated and distributed to the destinations in Italy by the end of the year.

Evoking «economic» and «sentimental» ties in its aid to Italy once again referred to the Portuguese authorities' aspirations to ensure an equilibrium between the past and the unfolding future while keeping the regime afloat. It was necessary for the Portuguese economy to maintain the economic relationships built between the two countries. Italy was a traditional importer of Portuguese edibles, especially following

the trading agreements signed between the *Estado Novo* and Benito Mussolini's regime between 1936 and 1939, which regulated commercial exchange payments and the settlement of Portuguese and Italian debts in arrears. The import of Portuguese food-stuffs, especially fish and cod liver oil, accounted for a considerable part of the arrangements made, mainly to respond to Italy's chronic shortage of edible resources and raw materials, which had been much aggravated during the war. Hence, the choice of produce for the donation was strategic. It took in Portugal's desire to strengthen bilateral economic relations and the relevance of the fisheries sector while also answering Italy's most urgent needs.

The bonds forged between the two regimes (and, in their narratives, the two peoples) also related to similar past strategies consolidated in the cultural and social spheres. In the 1930s, the close cooperation between Salazar and Mussolini around the idea of creating a new mentality and spirit of civil society intrinsically related to the corporative nature of the state fostered the crafting of similar cultural and social institutions and fundamental reforms in the economic and educational sectors. During the war, Salazar reinforced narratives of a common Mediterranean civilization to shield the region from German occupation and cultural imposition. These included Iberian-Italian cooperation in creating a regional block based on the «new order» envisaged by the governments of Italy, Portugal and Spain.

⁷ Unarms, Summary of Report by Mr. Francis B. Sayre on Unrra Mission to Portugal, 23 July-3 August 1946, S-0523-0448.

With the power dynamics in the conflict shifting in favour of the Allied forces, the Soviet interest in the Mediterranean area and the subsequent fall of Mussolini, Portugal adapted its repertoires – still evoking the same ideas of Mediterranean solidarity – this time to counter communist threats. Anticommunism was employed to simultaneously protect the *Estado Novo's* integrity and imperial and regional interests, and to claim the country's alignment with the West. From here on, the country's solidarity narratives evolved around the political and religious axes.

Contrary to Mussolini, Salazar was a devout Catholic who saw Pope Pius XII as a new ally and supporter of the Portuguese regime who could help sustain Italian-Portuguese relations in a context of Italian political uncertainty. Pius XII's aim to re-Christianize a continent devastated by the war resonated with one of the *Estado Novo's* fundamental cultural pillars, Catholicism, and its profound anticommunist character. Correspondence between the Holy See and Lisbon shows Salazar and Pius XII's mutual admiration, their sharing of political and social views and concerns, and close cooperation in the political (collaborating in guaranteeing King Umberto II's exile to Lisbon) and humanitarian realms. After a severance in Italo-Portuguese relations caused by the Communist Party's integration into the Italian government in 1944, Portugal rapidly sought to strengthen ties with the Christian Democratic-dominated republic. Solidarity with Italy was demonstrated in practice, through humanitarian relief. At the beginning of 1945, Portugal sent

one million pounds' worth of resources (dried fish, coffee and sugar) to the Italian Red Cross and the Holy See charitable organizations working in Italy in an early effort to re-establish bilateral relations. The Unrra-mediated donation to Italy in the following year reflected the continuation and consolidation of this path, alongside the efforts for the (controversial and conflicting) acceptance of the Portuguese regime by the international community.

Strategies, narratives and alliances

The case of Portuguese aid to Italy in the immediate aftermath of World War II enables us to identify several trends for a better understanding of the ways in which intra-Mediterranean solidarity was forged in this context.

The Portuguese (re)shaping and strengthening of political and economic relations both at the bilateral and international levels, in a context of regional and global change, was consolidated through narratives enhancing the cultural, religious and social ties binding Mediterranean states. These narratives reflected past cooperation between the Portuguese and Italian regimes, as well as anticommunist and religious sentiment, and were employed in practical shows of goodwill through humanitarian aid. In both donations – one bilateral, one through an international organization – the Portuguese government chose Italy as the recipient, even though in the latter case this demand went against Unrra's policies. Moreover, the donations not only fulfilled the recipient country's needs, but also Portugal's economic strategies and the

desired preservation of Italian-Portuguese relations.

Although they may seem small in comparison to other states, these endeavours demonstrate the power of *symbolic humanitarianism* in Portugal's attainment of its political objectives, namely, maintaining a far-right authoritarian regime while continuing to adapt to a context of profound change in global dynamics. The mediators of both donations – Unrra and the Holy See – and the narratives painted to frame the Portuguese aid also demonstrate how intra-Mediterranean solidarity was thought

to integrate both the secular and religious realms. Christianity, anticommunism and belonging to the «right side of history» were all powerful arguments in moulding Portuguese humanitarianism. The employment of such ideas was not unilateral, as they not only bound the donor country Portugal to Italy, but also to the aid mediators. It is crucial to thoroughly analyse the multiple actors, localities and scales so as to understand these intertwinements and rethink the ways in which humanitarianism shaped and was shaped by semi-peripheral actors' needs, interests and policymaking.

Ana Guardiã, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, Universidade de Coimbra, Centro de História da Sociedade e da Cultura, Rua de São Pedro, n. 2, 3000-370, Coimbra.

ana.guardiao@unifi.it

Orcid: 0000-0002-5989-7938

Ruth Nattermann

Towards Palestine via Italy. Mediterranean Aid Networks for Jewish Refugees

As Ana Guardiã convincingly demonstrates in her contribution on Portuguese aid to Italy, intra-Mediterranean solidarity in the postwar period was not only based on political and economic interests, but also involved «sentimental ties», framed within cultural and social connections that were consolidated before and during the war. Similarly, the idea of solidarity based on a shared cultural heritage was at the heart of transnational Jewish aid networks and

their protagonists, acting between Italy and Palestine in the aftermath of World War II. The Apennine peninsula became a central transit hub and headquarters of *Aliyah Bet* (literally, «Immigration Number Two») which organized the departure of clandestine ships taking European Jews from Italy to Palestine. At the same time, the interplay between Italian-Jewish humanitarian actors and refugee organizations created further Mediterranean connections as they ex-

panded towards Portugal during the global conflict.

The examination of Jewish aid networks highlights several common issues addressed by this round table within different sociopolitical contexts, in particular the influence of humanitarians' religious and political identities on the implementation of aid programmes, as well as the role of male and female experts and their collaboration beyond national borders. The relationships between the various actors and institutions involved also shed light on the intersections between intra-Mediterranean and global humanitarian dynamics, given that the respective Jewish aid initiatives received major support from groups and organizations in the United States.

While the history of Jewish displaced persons (Dps) is well researched¹, the humanitarian activists, including many female professionals, who engaged in refugee relief between the end of World War II and the foundation of the state of Israel have often been overlooked. I will first explain the organizational frameworks of the Italian-Jewish assistance which developed during World War II and laid the material and ideological foundations for the continuity of refugee work in the post-war period. Drawing on ego-documents, the second part focuses on Italian-Jewish protagonists of *Aliyah Bet* who had themselves been persecuted during the fascist dictatorship. I argue that Zionist, socialist and anti-fascist positions, which often intensified after

experiences of war atrocities and the Shoah, motivated the emigration of Jewish survivors towards Palestine, and at the same time inspired humanitarian engagement by male and female activists in the long term.

Connections of Italian-Jewish refugee aid

Italian-Jewish aid networks developed Mediterranean and global connections during World War II. The most important Jewish refugee organization in Italy was the *Delegazione per l'Assistenza degli Emigranti Ebrei* (Delasem, Delegation for the Assistance of Jewish Emigrants), founded in November 1939. Jewish religious and community affiliations played a prominent role in the Delasem leadership. Its initiators were the lawyers Dante Almansì (1877-1949) and Lelio Vittorio Valobra (1900-1976), respectively president and vice-president of the *Unione delle Comunità Israelitiche Italiane* (Ucii, Union of Jewish Communities in Italy); another central figure was Raffaele Cantoni (1896-1971) who became president of the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy after the end of the war. A lesser-known fact is that Delasem also established its own women's groups. They collaborated and sometimes overlapped with the *Associazione Donne Ebreo d'Italia* (Adei, Jewish Women's Union in Italy), founded in 1927, whose members the fascist authorities considered from 1941 onwards at the latest as dangerous «antifascist

¹ On the Italian context, see especially C. Renzo, *Jewish Displaced Persons in Italy 1943-1951. Politics, Rehabilitation, Identity*, London, Routledge, 2023; Ead., «Our Hopes Are Not Lost Yet»: *The Jewish Displaced Persons in Italy: Relief, Rehabilitation and Self-understanding (1943-1948)*, «Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History», December 2017; S. Salvatici, *Between National and International Mandates: Displaced Persons and Refugees in Post-War Italy*, «Journal of Contemporary History», 2014, 3.

internationalists» because of their Zionist outlook and aid activities for refugees and Jewish internees². The ideological influence between Delasem and Adei, largely Zionist and in the 1940s increasingly antifascist, was without doubt reciprocal; what is more, the personal and organizational connections of their collaborators – among them lawyers, social workers, doctors and educators – created networks of experts that operated between Italy, Palestine, North Africa and the Americas. Funding came mainly from international Jewish organizations in the United States, especially the American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in New York (Jdc)³. Delasem's links with Portugal strengthened from 1940, when another of its major donors, the Jewish overseas emigration association, Hicem, moved its European headquarters to Lisbon. It had been created in Paris in 1926, combining the offices of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (Hias) in New York, the Jewish Colonization Association (Ica) in London and EmigDirect, a migration organization in Berlin. The name Hicem was a combination of the three organization names, Hias, Ica and Emigdirect. By the beginning of the war, Hicem had branches across Europe, the Far East,

and North and South America. After the German invasion of France in 1940, the organization decided to transfer its European centre to neutral Portugal⁴. The close relationship between Italian-Jewish refugee relief and the Portuguese capital as the centre of donors was stressed in a report to the women's sections of Delasem in October 1941, which stated that «the most important of [the large central institutions that coordinate all emigration relief activities] is the Hicem Association for Emigration, headquartered in Lisbon»⁵.

In contrast to Guardião's case study, here Portuguese-Italian relations were not furthered by states or governments. Instead, they were triggered by connections between Jewish non-governmental organizations and individual actors, based on material and moral assistance. At the same time, it can be assumed that here too intra-Mediterranean solidarity involved «sentimental ties» or rather associations with a common cultural legacy as embodied by the Sephardic origin of a significant part of Italian Jewry. As for the collaborators of Hicem, they kept their Mediterranean connections even after November 1945 when the organization was replaced by Hias-Europe and Hias-France.

² See R. Nattermann, *Jewish Women in the Early Italian Women's Movement, 1861-1945. Biographies, Discourses, and Transnational Networks*, Cham, Springer International-Palgrave Macmillan, 2022, pp. 295-300.

³ See Y. Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper. A History of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1929-1939*, Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974.

⁴ See A. Milgram, *Portugal, the consuls, and the Jewish refugees, 1938-1941*, «Yad Vashem Studies», 1999, 27.

⁵ Relazione fatta alle Sezioni Femminili nell'ottobre 1941, in *Due anni Delasem*, Genoa, Tipografia Capurro, 1942, printed in M. Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini's Italy. From Equality to Persecution*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2006, p. 265.

Socialist Zionism and humanitarian continuity

In the months following World War II, not only were major international organizations such as Hicem restructured, but Delasem was also increasingly replaced by *Aliyah Bet* which recruited its collaborators to a considerable extent from the original networks of wartime refugee aid. As for the recipients of assistance, in 1946, there were approximately 20,000 Jewish DPs in Italy. 65% of them were from Poland, 7% from Romania, 5% from Czechoslovakia and another 5% from Hungary. The results of a questionnaire revealed that they were strongly determined not to return to their former countries but to emigrate to Palestine. Traumatic war experiences and the fear of antisemitism in central and eastern Europe merged with socialist Zionist leanings among the young DPs, furthered by cultural programmes in the refugee camps⁶.

The *Aliyah Bet* collaborators were principally left-wing Zionists too. Intra-organizational and personal relationships as well as experience in aid activities, which were also common features of other expert communities discussed in this forum, were major prerequisites for their work. Organized humanitarian action for Jewish refugees from eastern Europe who boarded ship from Italian ports to Palestine and South America had already started in the 1920s. Thus, the *Aliyah Bet* collaborators continued a tradition that had been shaped within the context of resurgent

Italian Zionism. Their emphasis on a Jewish national community, Jewish identity and solidarity through humanitarian action can be understood as a countermovement against the «re-Christianization» of postwar society promoted by Pope Pius XII and the Catholic Church's humanitarian diplomacy in Mediterranean Europe, as explained by Elena Serina.

Not surprisingly, among the central figures of *Aliyah Bet* was one of the first Italian-Jewish pioneers in Palestine, Ada Sereni (1905-1997), née Ascarelli, wife of the leading representative of socialist Zionism in Italy, Enzo Sereni (1905-1944)⁷. The married couple had emigrated from Rome to Palestine as early as 1926. During the war, Enzo Sereni fought in the Jewish brigade of the British army; he had been captured in Italy in May 1944 and executed six months later in Dachau. After the Liberation, Ada Sereni returned to Italy in search of her husband. When she discovered his fate, she decided to stay and get involved in helping Jewish refugees to emigrate to Palestine. Faced with the atrocities done to her husband, the young widow felt, as she writes in her autobiographical account *I clandestini del mare*, published in 1975, «dragged into the vortex» of *Aliyah Bet*:

I could well imagine the state of immense desperation of these survivors, who looked at Erez Israel like a castaway swept away by the currents off the mainland, and who shunned the idea of returning to live in places turned into immense cemeteries, and in the midst of

⁶ See C. Renzo, *Our Hopes*, cit., 104-109.

⁷ On Ada and Enzo Sereni, see C. Sereni, *Il gioco dei regni*, Florence, Giunti, 1995.

people who had tortured even children, infants⁸.

With communicative skills and political ability, fluent in Hebrew, Arabic, French, English and German, Sereni organized more than thirty expeditions from the Italian coasts. She acted as a relief worker both on the ships and as a negotiator in political and institutional spaces between Italy, Palestine and the United States.

The continuity between interwar Jewish aid and postwar *Aliyah Bet* activism was embodied in particular by one of Sereni's collaborators, the young chemist Dario Navarra (1924-2017). He was the son of scholar and social worker Marta Bernstein Navarra (1895-1965), a co-founder of Adei, whose humanitarian expertise had developed in an environment characterized by feminism, socialism and Zionism in Milan. She had been active in aid projects for refugees as well as for Jews in Palestine and Libya since the late 1920s⁹. Towards the end of the war, Dario Navarra, who had lived in Lausanne since 1942, got involved in Delasem, helping refugees and partisan groups on the Italian-Swiss border. In 1945, he returned to Milan and worked with Sereni's group of *Aliyah Bet* volunteers. Interviewed in 1985 for the *Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea* (CDEC, Centre of Contemporary Jewish Documentation), Navarra recalled his activities which included the purchase of

ships and patrolling during embarkation¹⁰. In 1947, when Navarra himself tried to emigrate to Palestine, his ship was diverted to Cyprus. He was interned for eleven months during which, due to his language skills, he worked with the American Joint Distribution Committee. Navarra eventually reached Israel in April 1948 and settled first in the Givat Brenner kibbutz which had been co-founded by Enzo and Ada Sereni in 1928.

Another key protagonist of *Aliyah Bet* was the businessman Giorgio Nissim (1908-1976) who had worked as the Tuscan representative of Delasem since 1939. After 8 September 1943, when the assault on Jewish lives began with the German occupation of Italy, he created an extensive underground aid network for Jewish refugees in Tuscany, while he and his family survived in a hideout. His memoirs, written in 1961, offer an insight both into his rescue operations during World War II and his postwar involvement with *Aliyah Bet*. The first transports of Jewish refugees co-organized by Nissim started out in small fishing vessels from Bari. In his memoirs, we get an idea of the plight of the refugees and the severe methods of British surveillance:

They were converting the hold [of the vessel] to make it a carrier of stowaway passengers, also installing a large water tank capable of quenching the thirst of those poor

⁸ A. Sereni, *I clandestini del mare. L'emigrazione ebraica in terra d'Israele dal 1945 al 1948*, Milan, Mursia, 1973, p. 14.

⁹ See G. Lopez, *Ricordo di Marta Navarra*, «Rassegna Mensile Di Israele», 1975, 9-10, p. 419.

¹⁰ Cdec Milano, *Interview with Dario Navarra*, <http://digital-library.cdec.it/cdec-web/audiovideo/detail/IT-CDEC-AV0001-000171/dario-navarra.html> (5 gennaio 2024).

refugees for fifteen days because England was watching the coast with a radar on Mount Carmel in Haifa. The fishing boat would stay maybe fifteen days outside the territorial waters until the surveillance relaxed and, all of a sudden, from the coast they would bring the refugees ashore as quickly as possible¹¹.

Thanks to his financial means and experience in refugee relief, Giorgio Nissim remained one of the leading personalities of *Aliyah Bet* until the foundation of the state of Israel. The same is true for Ada Sereni. In her autobiography, the Zionist pioneer and humanitarian whose husband had been murdered in the Shoah remembered with palpable inner engagement that on 14 May 1948, «the last ship of that flagless fleet that for three years had plied the waters of the Mediterranean» left Italy «[...] but the log books were not hidden, nor was the name of the ship changed, because on that same day [...] they had proclaimed after nineteen centuries the reconstitution of the State of Israel»¹².

An open ending

Intra-Mediterranean solidarity as reflected by postwar Italian-Jewish aid networks essentially did not involve assistance between countries but was based on the transnational relationships between people within non-governmental organizational frameworks and expert communities. The Mediterranean and global connections of Italian-Jewish refugee relief which had developed towards Portugal and the United States during the war continued in the

early postwar period, until the activities of *Delasem* started to be increasingly replaced by *Aliyah Bet*. In both organizations, characterized by antifascism and socialist Zionism, women participated alongside men as a matter of course. International Jewish organizations in the United States, especially the Joint Distribution Committee, remained the most important supporters of the underground operations between Italy and Palestine, thereby strengthening the ties between Mediterranean and global aid efforts.

The examples of antifascist Jewish actors such as Ada Sereni, Dario Navarra and Giorgio Nissim, who engaged in on-site refugee relief work, show the significant influence of political and religious identities on humanitarian engagement, here based on Jewish solidarity and the idea of a Jewish national community. The protagonists had themselves experienced persecution and atrocities, which enhanced their Zionist outlook and, in Nissim's case, also his religious consciousness. After the Liberation, he re-founded the Jewish community of Lucca. Ada Sereni and Dario Navarra viewed the state of Israel as a safe harbour for the last survivors of the Shoah, and a place where Jewish life could continue. However, even among fervent Zionists, the joy for this achievement was often temporary, as it caused new conflicts, wars and a refugee crisis on the Palestinian side, leading to new consequences for international aid organizations and networks in the Mediterranean.

¹¹ G. Nissim, *Memorie di un ebreo toscano (1938-1948)*, ed. by L. Picciotto, Roma, Carocci, 2005, p. 155.

¹² A. Sereni, *I clandestini*, cit., p. 255.

Ruth Nattermann, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Neuere und Neueste Geschichte. Research Centre Global Dynamics (ReCentGlobe) University of Leipzig, 04109, Leipzig
ruth.nattermann@lmu.de
Orcid: 0009-0005-3561-3688

Elena Serina

A Southern European Stronghold for Catholic Humanitarianism. Italo-Iberian networks of Solidarity in the Postwar Reconstruction

While the Catholic Church, particularly in southern Europe, played a pivotal role in implementing and shaping humanitarian programmes in the aftermath of World War II, historians have largely overlooked the intricate interplay between Catholic Ngos, international agencies and government policies in postwar relief efforts. Only in the last few years, following the recent opening of the Vatican archives relating to the pontificate of Pius XII (1939-1958), has there been a surge of interest in Vatican humanitarian diplomacy and Catholic humanitarianism¹. In particular, scholars have emphasized the material and moral assistance provided to refugees and displaced persons in northern Europe, notably in France or Germany, as well as transatlantic solidarity ties encompassing western Europe and North America. In these regions, Catholic humanitarian activism has often been interpreted as a form of soft power employed

by Catholics to demonstrate their alignment with democratic and liberal values, thereby giving it international recognition and legitimacy. However, Catholic visions of postwar humanitarianism were far from uniform. In southern Europe, particularly in Italy, Spain and Portugal, national Catholic charities developed a distinctive response to the postwar challenges.

My contribution to this forum aims to explore the development of intra-southern European networks of solidarity among those countries, examining how Catholic aid flourished in the early Cold War outside of the liberal Christian democratic mainstream. Specifically, I will delve into the links between the *Pontificia Commissione di Assistenza* (Pca, Pontifical Commission on Assistance), the Portuguese and the Spanish *Caritas*. These connections reveal the consolidation of a «southern European stronghold» in forming the

¹ M. Levant, N. Valbousquet, *Introduction*, «Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines», 2022, 134, 2; D. Brydan, *Christian Humanitarianism, Refugee Stories, and the Making of the Cold War West*, «The Historical Journal», 2023, 66.

present-day *Caritas Internationalis*. Officially founded in 1951 by Pius XII under the name of *Conferenza Internazionale della Carità Cattolica* (International Conference of Catholic Charity), its formation engaged with myriad both male and female intellectuals, humanitarian activists and social experts, as well as transnational networks and national rivalries. In this multifaced context, Pca director Ferdinando Baldelli was appointed president of *Caritas Internationalis*, as he had close ties with the Vatican secretary of state. His nomination garnered strong support from Iberian Catholics. Baldelli not only engaged in extensive exchanges with them to plan postwar aid to Italy, but also shared a conservative vision of Catholic humanitarianism. The common goal of re-Christianizing postwar society was to enhance Italo-Iberian relationships and facilitate the circulation of ideas and humanitarian activists. Moreover, these connections were part of a unified political strategy which sought to establish the national and international supremacy of Catholic aid over state intervention and non-Catholic humanitarian programmes.

The exploration of Catholic humanitarianism in southern Europe provides fresh insights into central issues discussed in this round table. Firstly, it engages with the question of the influence of religion in the definition and implementation of aid programmes, a topic that the scholarship on humanitarianism has not yet sufficiently investigated. Then, by focusing on the Mediterranean region, it allows an investigation into the cultural meaning

of aid for the Pca and the Iberian *Caritas*, capturing their specificities. Beyond Catholicism, they shared a political agenda that, as particularly evident in the case of the Pca, positioned them in a nuanced interplay of cooperation and competition with national public institutions and non-Catholic international humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (Unrra). This case study thus addresses the intricate task of reconsidering the centrality of Mediterranean Europe in global humanitarian dynamics.

The examination of the transnational role of the Pca forms the focal point of this contribution. The initial section provides an overview of the establishment and growth of the Pca, highlighting its influence in postwar Italian reconstruction. The last two sections explore the Pca's interactions with the Portuguese and Spanish *Caritas* while aiming to understand the cultural and social model propagated by the Pca throughout its humanitarian initiatives. Specifically, I will analyse the correspondence between Baldelli and Fernanda Jardim, president of the *União de Caridade Portuguesa* (Union of Portuguese Charity). This case study sheds light on the transnational connections between Italy and Portugal, fostering a dialogue with the contribution of Ana Guardiã. In conclusion, I will examine the emergence of intra-southern European networks of solidarity within Catholic humanitarian internationalism, while scrutinizing Baldelli's interactions with the *Secretariado Nacional de Caridad* (National Secretary of Charity) in Spain.

The rise of the network. Baldelli and the Pca

Established in 1944 by Pius XII to overcome wartime emergencies in Italy, the Pca was considered the «truly longa manus of the Pope's charity», as contemporary sources dubbed it². Although largely overlooked by the scholarship, the *Pontificia* emerged as a pivotal player in postwar relief distribution, securing public funding and subsidies to expand its extensive network nationwide. In the aftermath of the war, it went beyond aiding refugees and war victims, gradually initiating summer camps for children, establishing schools for social workers and offering aid to the impoverished clergy, prisoners and rural workers. The overarching goal was to influence the development of the Italian welfare state.

Ferdinando Baldelli, appointed president of the Pca by Pius XII, played a crucial role in the swift advancement of the organization. Exploiting his intimate affiliations with the Vatican secretary of state, he wielded substantial influence in shaping postwar humanitarian initiatives in Italy. For example, he actively contributed to the formulation of the government's reconstruction plans and successfully secured financial support from Unrra. The Pca's influence was further bolstered by the backing of US policymakers and social experts who were interested in collaborating with the organization to initiate a relief programme in Italy and counter the ascent of the Italian Communist Party. Driven by concerns over the

Communists' increasing popularity, particularly among the lower socioeconomic classes, the Christian Democratic Party also initially endorsed the Pca's welfare initiatives. However, particularly following 1947, this partnership evolved into a point of contention with the Christian Democratic ruling class. As the sources found in the Vatican Archives have revealed, some prominent members of the Christian Democratic Party, including Ludovico Montini, brother of the future Pope Paul VI, strongly objected to Pca interference in the development of the Italian welfare state and resisted its persistent demands for increased public funding to broaden its activities.

These church-state tensions were emblematic of Baldelli's conservative Catholic stance, wherein assistance was considered a tool for instating the restoration of Christendom. While acknowledging the imperative of a welfare state to address the burgeoning social needs of the population, he contended that it ought to be grounded in Christian principles. As he argued in 1949, «while in front of us lies the secular-Masonic welfare coalition on one side and the no less formidable red bloc on the other, it is precisely in the field of assistance that Catholic forces have to unite; charity must be organized, and implemented on a social field»³. The apprehension about the rising influence of communism prompted Baldelli to expand the influence of the Pca beyond the Italian borders. In particular, he strengthened his contacts with Portuguese

² Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (Aav), Pontificia Opera di Assistenza (Poa), b. 4, fasc. 8, Commento del cardinale Granito Pignatelli di Belmonte al messaggio natalizio del Papa, 24 dicembre 1946.

³ Vaa, Poa, b. 4, fasc. 1, Discorso di Baldelli alla Conferenza della Pca con i vescovi delle Tre Venezie, Giugno 1949.

and Spanish Catholics, involving them in the ongoing internationalization of Catholic charities. Similarly, they relied on Baldelli in their pursuit of international legitimacy.

Pca and Portuguese *Caritas* connections

On 9 May 1946, the *União de Caridade Portuguesa*, founded by Fernanda Ivens Ferraz Jardim, had its statutes approved by the decree issued by undersecretary of state for social assistance, Joaquim Trigo de Negreiros. The primary objective of the organization was «the protection of minors within the family, school and professional environments» achieved through collaboration with both domestic and foreign, private, civil and religious organizations⁴. A key feature of these statutes was the explicit emphasis on international exchange with similar organizations abroad. In 1947, a concrete manifestation of this commitment emerged with the launch of the temporary child reception programme, providing relief to war-affected foreign children, known as «*Caritas* children».

In the ongoing investigations in the Vatican Archives, no evidence has been found regarding programmes sending Italian children to Portugal in the late Forties. Nevertheless, it has come to light that the Pca actively collaborated with the *União* in its humanitarian efforts, providing aid to children, mainly from Austria, who transited through Italy before reaching the Iberian Peninsula. For instance, in a letter dated 22

September 1948, Jardim thanked Baldelli for Pca summer camp pamphlets, which influenced similar initiatives in Portugal. She also assured that the approximately one thousand Austrian and French children hosted in Portugal would offer prayers for the Pope and the *Pontificia*, underscoring the close relationship between the two organizations. Moreover, Jardim encouraged Baldelli to spearhead the ongoing internationalization of Catholic charity as, using his Vatican connections, he could advocate for the inclusion of the *União* in the forthcoming organization. To quote Jardim own's words:

What I mean is that the [Portuguese] *Caritas* cannot and must no longer be a local, narrow activity that serves only one sector and nothing else. The *Caritas* [...] must work in the near future in a similar manner to the Red Cross, but with a solely Catholic focus [...]. In Portugal, they oppose the *Caritas* by attempting to reduce it to any small local work (*operuncola*), rejecting its international exchanges, or openly opposing all of its activities⁵.

As these words suggest, the *União* had a controversial relationship with the government and the national ecclesiastical hierarchy, which had not approved its foundation. It was only in 1956, at the behest of the Vatican and the Patriarch of Lisbon, Cardinal Manuel Cerejeira, that Jardim's association was abolished and replaced by an organization endorsed by the Portuguese bishops. Prior to this, the *União* aspired to

⁴ Arquivo Histórico da Cáritas Portuguesa, A/A/001/001, União de Caridade Portuguesa, *Estatutos*. Lisboa: s.n., 1946, Art. 1.

⁵ Vaa, Poa, b. 84, fasc. 7. Lettera da Jardim a Baldelli, 22 settembre 1948.

engage in the rise of *Caritas Internationalis*, seeking not only international legitimacy but also striving to assert its prominence within the Portuguese context. For that reason, in concluding her letter, Jardim urged Baldelli to provide details about the Pca's main activities. This request was not only aimed at emulating its organization but also at demonstrating a close association with the *Pontificia* to the national episcopate. The goal was to persuade them to support a similar organization in Portugal, where, as she mentioned, there was «an extreme urgency for this work, [even if] some prelates do not see it in a good light [...] because they ignore what it is about and the results». In response, Baldelli sent various brochures and committed financial support to the assistance of more than one thousand five hundred «*Caritas* children» passing through Italy. He also expressed the hope that «such initiatives be multiplied and thus form the basis of a collaboration and coordination of the activities of different Catholic organizations»⁶.

Championing a southern European network in *Caritas Internationalis*

Established in 1942, the *Secretariado Nacional de Caridad* was formed to coordinate Catholic charitable initiatives during wartime emergencies and contribute to the post-civil war «re-Christianization» of Spain. For that reason, it was intricately linked to the

lay activist group *Acción Católica Española* (Spanish Catholic Action), which was considered «one of the main instruments of the national-Catholic project» and maintained close ties with both the church hierarchy and the national government⁷. While the Portuguese *Caritas* refrained from participating in the preparatory work for the *Caritas Internationalis* due to opposition from the national hierarchy, the Spanish *Caritas* thus had a distinct trajectory.

According to the Vatican sources consulted thus far, contacts between Baldelli and the Spanish *Caritas* multiplied in 1947. This occurred after the conference organized by the French *Secours Catholique* (Catholic Aid) in Paris, which aimed to align diverse national *Caritas* humanitarian initiatives in anticipation of unifying them into a comprehensive international Catholic humanitarian organization. However, the Pca was not unfamiliar to Spanish Catholics. In the aftermath of the war, the *Obra Católica de Asistencia Universitaria* (Catholic Work for Academic Assistance) played a significant role in assisting the *Pontificia*. This support involved aiding foreign Catholic students who had become refugees in Italy and facilitating their migration to Spain. As the internationalization of charity efforts progressed, connections between the Pca and the *Secretariado Nacional de Caridad* deepened.

Upon the establishment of *Caritas Internationalis*, the Spanish *Caritas* secured a position on the executive committee, a

⁶ Vaa, Poa, b. 84, fasc. 7. Lettera da Baldelli a Jardim, 11 ottobre 1948.

⁷ F. Montero, *Origen y evolución de la acción católica Española*, in A.-L. López Villaverde, A. Botti, J. de la Cueva Merino (ed.), *Clericalismo y asociacionismo católico en España, de la Restauración a la Transición*, Cuenca, Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2005, p. 142.

notable accomplishment considering the initial scepticism from *Secours Catholique*. Indeed, as David Brydan has pointed out, «Spanish involvement in these forms of Catholic humanitarianism was unique in many respects, shaped by the direct influence of the Franco regime and by the context of Spain's position in the post-war world»⁸. The appointment of the Spanish *Caritas* on the executive committee was largely facilitated by the mediation efforts of Baldelli. As he emphasized to the secretary of the Spanish *Caritas*, don Miguel Zapata Echevarría, in 1955:

At least for as long as I am president of the International Catholic Confederation of Charity, I intend that the orientation to be followed for the coming activity should be one and the same, in close agreement, taking advantage of the collaboration of all members, but especially of those who, like the Spanish, provide us with a greater guarantee of similar thought⁹.

The inclusion of the Spanish *Caritas* was deemed crucial not only because, in the

absence of *União de Caridade Portuguesa*, it could represent the Iberian Peninsula within the *Caritas Internationalis* but also because of its shared cultural identity, shaped by a conservative vision of Catholic humanitarianism.

To conclude, the exploration of this southern Europe network in the *Caritas Internationalis* has uncovered new research paths. On one hand, it has shed light on an ideological and cultural affinity among Mediterranean European *Caritas* organizations, providing a more nuanced view of power dynamics and relationships within Catholic humanitarian internationalism. On the other hand, additional research would be valuable not only to further explore the political and cultural significance of Catholic aid but also to investigate its interactions with non-Catholic social policymakers and international organizations, such as Unrra. These connections can cast light on efforts to promote a form of Catholic rehabilitation, centred on renewing both individual and collective existence according to the Catholic social doctrine.

Elena Serina, Scuola Superiore Meridionale, Global History and Governance, Largo S. Marcellino 10, 80138 Napoli
elena.serina@unina.it
Orcid:0009-0006-3055-3927.

⁸ D. Brydan, *Franco's Internationalists: Social Experts and Spain's Search for Legitimacy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 160.

⁹ Vaa, Poa, b. 84, fasc. 84. Lettera da Baldelli a don Miguel Zapata Echevarría, 17 gennaio 1955.

Development Based on Solidarity? The Oecd, Italy and Greece

The burgeoning historiography on the Organisation for European Co-operation and Development (Oecd) has recently devoted specific attention to programmes that started in the mid-Fifties having a focus on Mediterranean Europe, which included Italy, Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Spain. Founded in 1948 with the name of Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (Oeec), the international agency created to administer the Marshall Plan was now taking on the socioeconomic advancement of southern Europe's «backward» member countries as a new mission. At a later stage, development programmes would be extended to the Third World. Recent research has examined the political and cultural foundations of the Oeec-Oecd programmes for Mediterranean Europe, their implementation at a local level, and the global circulation of methods and practices initially shaped in Europe. It is against this backdrop that the peculiar case of Italy emerged. Italy benefitted from the Oeec-Oecd programmes, and at the same time, it provided crucial inputs for their planning and development. The role of advisor for the Oeec-Oecd was held by Svimez¹, an Ital-

ian think tank with strong connections to the political class of government that, in the Fifties, was conducting innovative research on the «backward regions» of the South of Italy².

My contribution to this round table builds on the research carried out so far, but it suggests further paths of investigation, aimed at exploring the connections between the Oeec-Oecd programmes and the rise of aid initiatives between southern European countries. In particular, the archival documents I draw on encourage us to look into a) the room for manoeuvre enjoyed by southern European countries in the frame of the Oeec-Oecd programmes, developing forms of cooperation and nurturing their common interests; b) the direct and indirect connections between the programmes for the development of southern Europe and the following Oeec-Oecd initiatives to boost individual national economies; c) the political, economic and cultural meaning of aid at a regional level.

The overall goal is to shift the focus from the Oeec-Oecd's central planning, action and objectives to the agency of the recipient countries. This approach allows us to

¹ Svimez stands for Associazione per lo sviluppo dell'industria nel Mezzogiorno (Association for the Development of Industry in the Mezzogiorno).

² M. Alacevich, M. Granata, *Sviluppo e istruzione. Ocse e Sud Europa nel Progetto regionale mediterraneo*, «Contemporanea», 2019, 2; M. Granata, *Investimenti per lo sviluppo: i progetti pilota in Epiro e Sardegna*, «Mondo contemporaneo», 2021, 1; M. Granata, *Oece, Svimez e programmazione economica nel dopoguerra*, «Italia contemporanea», 2019, 290.

see intra-southern European aid at the intersection of the impulses from the organization's centre, the interplay of different actors and their agendas, and the circulation of ideas and experts. The multifaceted relationship between Italy and Greece offers a significant case study. Italy and Greece were special recipients of the Oeec-Oecd development plan for southern Europe, which started with two parallel projects, one implemented in Sardinia and the other in Epirus. Italian support for Greece in designing the National Development Plan (issued in 1960) stemmed from the links between the two countries established in earlier projects. The cooperation of earlier years also favoured the participation of Italy in the Oecd Consortium for Greece (launched in 1962), which ended in bilateral negotiations between Rome and Athens.

A network of experts between Rome and Athens

As is well known, the Oeec-Oecd designed the Sardinia (1957-1962) and Epirus (1959-1962) schemes as «pilot projects», to be replicated later in other Mediterranean countries⁵. Technical assistance was the cornerstone of the programmes for the advancement of development in southern Europe. This is not surprising: technical cooperation had been a pillar of Oeec-Oecd

policies since its foundation, and between the Fifties and Sixties it was the main drive behind most of the agencies in charge of international aid. What is even more interesting, however, is the key role that the involvement of experts in technical assistance played in tailoring the relationship between Italy and Greece. The Oeec-Oecd mobilized a pool of international professionals, but at the same time, the projects in Sardinia and Epirus relied on national experts and favoured their networking across the boundaries of the two countries. Svimez was the hub where ideas were exchanged, methods and practices were discussed, and people and techniques circulated.

Svimez's experts contributed to drafting the Oeec-Oecd programme for the development of Mediterranean Europe, and they were involved in the explorative mission for the project in Epirus. When the project started, the Oeec-Oecd invited the Greek government to rely on Svimez's professional advice⁴. Technical assistance ended up being provided thanks to the close collaboration between Italian and Greek experts. Svimez invited their Greek colleagues in Rome not only to discuss the «twin projects» of Sardinia and Epirus⁵, but also to lecture at special events, such as the international training weeks regularly organized for young scholars and the public servants of Mediterranean countries⁶. At the centre of

⁵ G. Fossi, *L'esperienza Oee/Oecd des «zones pilotes» en Sardaigne et en Epire*, «Développement et civilisations», 1965, 21.

⁴ Granata, *Documenti per lo sviluppo*.

⁵ Archivio Svimez (Ass), Roma, Serie 3, Ricerche e studi, b. 89 Piano Epiro, sottofasc. 1, Visita di funzionari Greci alla Svimez, 19 settembre 1958.

⁶ Ass, Serie 3, Ricerche e studi, b. 90 Grecia (piano) studi sulla programmazione, sottofasc. 1, Lettera ad Aristide Marchetti, 16 febbraio 1960.

this exchange of expertise lay the analysis of features common to the two economies (regarding resources, structural problems and the environment), which engendered a comparative approach. The economist Ioannis (John) Pesmazoglou offers us a good example. Pesmazoglou was a consultant for the Bank of Greece, and in 1961, he led the team that negotiated the agreement with the European Economic Community. In the lectures he gave in Rome the comparison between Greece and southern Italy was the main frame for the analysis of Greek development problems⁷. In 1960 the French journal «Revue d'économie politique» published the text of Pesmazoglou's lectures⁸. In the meantime, Pasquale Saraceno and Ioannis Pesmazoglou established a friendly relationship; their exchanges over the similarities between their countries' economies continued in the following years and involved other members of their research teams⁹.

Cooperation between Italian and Greek experts (all of them strongly tied to government circles) also played a key role in the Greek plan for national development, which was to incorporate the Epirus project. Again, Svimez was requested to provide Greece with technical assistance, but

this time there was no Oeec-Oecd intermediation: the agreement was concluded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Greek Ministry of Hellenic Coordination¹⁰. In April 1960, the Greek prime minister announced the launch of the national development programme. In his public speech, Konstantinos Karamanlis acknowledged the support from the Italians, whose expertise – he believed – had been particularly valuable because Italy had to face problems «similar to the problems of Greece's economy»¹¹.

At the beginning of 1961, the Oecd (which had just replaced the Oeec) opened discussions over a special plan for Greece to facilitate the implementation of the national development scheme. Cooperation between Italy and Greece strengthened, and technical assistance became the basis for economic aid within the consortium launched by the Oecd in 1962.

Negotiating aid

The consortium stemmed from the existing programmes for developing southern Europe but took a different approach. It was to provide Greece with «an adequate flow of foreign resources»¹² that could allow Athens to invest in its national development

⁷ Istoriko Archeio Trapezas tis Ellados (Iate, Bank of Greece Historical Archives), Ioannis (Yangos) Pesmazoglou Archive, A6S2Y5F24: Omilíes sti Svimez [Talks to Svimez] – Roma (27/04/1963 – 05/05/1963) «L'intérêt de la Grèce pour le développement de la Grèce et de l'Italie».

⁸ *Problèmes de développement économique en Grèce*, «Revue d'économie politique», 1960, no. 2.

⁹ See the correspondence between Saraceno and Pesmazoglou, Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Acs), Carte Saraceno, 02 J.S. Pesmazoglou, Bank of Greece.

¹⁰ Ass, Serie 3, Ricerche e studi, b. 90 Grecia (piano) studi sulla programmazione, sottofasc. 1, Consulenza Saraceno per il governo Greco.

¹¹ *M. Caramanlis annonce le programme quinquennal définitivement établi pour l'essor économique de la Grèce*, «Les messenger d'Athènes», 10 April 1960, p. 1.

¹² Oecd Historical Archive (Oecd-Ha), C/Wp1(62)1-6, Working Party no. 1 of the Council on the Long-Term Development Problems of Greece, 7 December 1962, p. 1.

plan. The Greek undersecretary of state praised the beginning of a new phase, which – he stated – entailed «development in its real content: development based on mutual or collective assistance and solidarity»¹⁵. Italy contributed to the «flow of foreign resources» to Greece with 6 million dollars: half of the 12 million of Germany, but three times the contribution of Canada and much more substantial than the allocations of Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands¹⁴. Cooperation with Greece was clearly a priority for Italy, and it is interesting to look at how the aid was delivered. Italy was the only member of the consortium which did not officially «tie» the aid to Greece. Yet, the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs engaged in long negotiations around the list of goods that Greece was supposed to purchase from Italy for the amount of 6 million dollars. The list was crucial to balancing the donor's and the recipient's interests. The «economic miracle» was waning in Italy, and it was essential to stimulate national industry. The supply of Italian goods to Greece could pave the way for a wider penetration of the Greek market. On the other side of the Mediterranean, Greece was struggling with the implementation of the development plan, and the government aimed to create a virtuous circle be-

tween the mechanization of agriculture and the development of industry while at the same time reducing the dependence on imports and enhancing Greek integration in the international economy. Mutual convenience was the unspoken keyword of negotiations.

In 1966, Greece submitted the consortium a request for additional funding, which it claimed was necessary to guarantee the definitive take-off of development and stabilize the national economy. When submitting their request, the Greek authorities were already enjoying the support of Italy, which they regarded as crucial to breaking the scepticism of all the other members. After consultation with the relevant ministries, the Italian representative at the Oeecd endorsed the Greek request in the name of «the policy of solidarity towards a Mediterranean ally we are linked to by special cooperation ties»¹⁵.

Rethinking the relationship between donors and recipients

Undoubtedly, the term «ally» evoked the political roots of the solidarity towards Greece. From the beginning, the Oeecd-Oeecd had regarded the special programmes for developing Mediterranean Europe as a means for securing the region's stability against Cold War tensions. Yet, the Italian endorsement

¹⁴ Acs, Ministero del bilancio e della programmazione economica, Gabinetto, 0000906 – Archivio generale 1950-1972, b. 26, sottofasc. Consorzio Grecia, Opening Statement by the Greek Undersecretary of State for Coordination, Paris, 10 October 1962.

¹⁵ Acs, Ministero del bilancio e della programmazione economica, Gabinetto, 0000906 – Archivio generale 1950-1972, b. 26, sottofasc. Grecia. Consorzio aiuti, telesspresso Consorzio Oece aiuti Grecia, 27 maggio 1965.

¹⁶ Acs, Ministero del bilancio e della programmazione economica, Gabinetto, 0000906 – Archivio generale 1950-1972, b. 26, sottofasc. Grecia. Consorzio aiuti, *Rapporto dell'Oece sulla situazione economica della Grecia*, 9 maggio 1966, p. 2.

of the Greek request for additional funds was also due to the «special cooperational ties» that had linked Italy and Greece over the last ten years, between technical assistance and financial cooperation, within the framework but also expanding beyond the Oeec-Oecd development policies. The emphasis on the similarities between the southern Italian and Greek economies – boosted by the Oeec-Oecd programmes for Mediterranean Europe – offered solid grounds for Svimez’s advisory role, created the preconditions for experts from the two countries to jointly study development, and fuelled the continuity of Italian ties with Greece. At the same time, it strengthened Greece’s negotiation power, blurring the hierarchical relationship between the donor and recipient countries.

Now that its development seemed to be underway, several western countries considered investment in the Greek economy potentially profitable. In 1966, when the Italian government had already opted for a second loan to Greece but had to decide whether to raise the amount to 10 million dollars, Greek diplomats played with possibly

assigning the Italian company Ansaldo the construction of the power plant in Keratsini, near the port of Piraeus. Italy was one of several international competitors for this work. Ansaldo got the job and immediately after, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amintore Fanfani, decided that Greece’s request was acceptable and raised the amount of the loan to 10 million dollars. In the eyes of the Italian government, the recent sharp increase in Italian exports to Greece was a good additional reason. Italian economic weaknesses and ambitions laid the groundwork for the Italian programme for Greece, and at the same time, put Greece in a favourable position in aid negotiations.

The case of Italy and Greece shows that the focus on intra-southern European actions brings to the surface the political, economic and cultural meanings of aid at a regional level; unveils the various narratives mobilized and accompanying the relief programmes (e.g., «Mediterranean solidarity»); and sheds new light on the complex relationship between donors and recipients.

Silvia Salvatici, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, via delle Pandette 32, 50127 Firenze
 silvia.salvatici@unifi.it
 Orcid: 0000-0003-0140-9660

Greek and Intra-Mediterranean Humanitarian Mobilization for Cyprus after the Turkish

Greece and global humanitarian dynamics

The meaning of intra-Mediterranean solidarity between Greece and Cyprus since the 1974 Turkish invasion has remained an uncharted area of investigation. The topic has often been studied under the primarily geopolitical lens of the Cyprus question, prevalently focusing on the restoration of a democratic polity in Athens and the role of Greece in the negotiations for the withdrawal of the Turkish armed forces from the island in the long run. Within the present round table, my contribution aims to explore how Greek state and non-state humanitarian agents distributed material aid and expressed immaterial solidarity either in the frame of their transnational alliances or upon their own initiative.

At the outset, Greek humanitarianism was embedded in international humanitarian dynamics owing to its obligation to make a financial contribution to the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces in Cyprus (Unficyp). In the aftermath of the Turkish attack operations between 20-24 July and 15-18 August 1974, the ensuing displacement of thousands of refugees led to a humanitarian emergency. The Turkish and Greek military confrontations dislodged at least

two hundred thousand Greek Cypriots and sixty-five thousand Turkish Cypriots from their villages. The Unficyp stepped in to tackle the emergency, aiming to secure humanitarian corridors, appease intra-ethnic conflicts in the Cypriot villages and supervise the ceasefire of the mutual attacks along the 1964 Green Line, a 110-mile demilitarized zone that divided Cyprus into two parts. Dependent on voluntary and occasional donations from its members, the Unficyp was already encountering budgetary shortages in 1975 and 1976¹. Notably, the Greek government offered much higher periodic instalments than the other member states during these two years. Its donations amounted to 1.6 million Us dollars, only preceded by the two million of the Federal Republic of Germany².

But outside its Un membership, archival evidence shows that the Greek state had a minor impact on other terrains of international humanitarian diplomacy for Cyprus. Amid the political, economic and military crisis following the overturn of the junta, the new government of Konstantinos Karamanlis prepared neither immediate humanitarian plans nor long-term economic programmes for development aid towards Cyprus. One reason was that the Greek

¹ Ypiresia Diplomatikou kai Istorikou Arxeiou (Ydia), 5 Dod, Fakelos 8, Ypofakelos 1, F. 1265: Diethnis Eirineutiki Dynamis Kyprou, 1263/148.

² Ydia, 5 Dod Fakelos 8, Ypofakelos 1, F. 1265: «Pledges and Payments to the Unficyp», 31 December 1976.

military branches of the Hellenic Force in Cyprus (Eldyk), which had been stationed on the island since 1960, had lost their credibility as potential peace facilitators and assistants to Greek Cypriot civilians after the Greek junta's coup d'état against Makarios on 15 July 1974. Indeed, the Greek army only assisted the Un relief operations in Greek villages through the National Guard, a military body which also contained Greek Cypriot soldiers. Transnational institutions considered that an independent Greek intervention would increase the tension and undermine the maintenance of the humanitarian corridors that had been agreed upon at the level of the Un.

Another reason for Greece's minor role was its weakness in the international fora of humanitarian diplomacy. Since the Fifties, the Greek Cypriot ethnarchy had been seeking to limit the cases in which the Greek state spoke on its behalf and to arrange its foreign policy as independently as possible. Hence, when the World Health Organization shipped medical material for Cypriots in July 1974, contact was made directly with the director general of the Ministry of Health in the capital Nicosia⁵. When the European Economic Community sent 50 tonnes of milk powder, it coordinated its actions directly with the Greek Cypriot authorities, without involving Greek humanitarians or the Greek institutions.

Corollary evidence comes from within the International Committee of the Red Cross (Icrc). Although Icrc officials issued a general appeal to the national Red Cross societies to come to Cyprus' aid, they hinted at fears that the Greek-Turkish hostility could prevent the Greek Red Cross medical personnel from reaching the coast of Cyprus with its own medical ships and setting up a Greek health pavilion⁴. For his part, the head of the Greek Red Cross, Kefalas, declared his eagerness to send medical material, doctors and blood to Geneva. But as of 23 July 1974, the airport in Athens remained closed, and the only way to transfer the blood supplies and medical material to Geneva was by train⁵. On the following day, the Icrc announced that the Greek blood was not needed, because there were already enough stocks in Geneva⁶. At that juncture, the Icrc regarded the active presence of Greek doctors and medicine as a diplomatic hindrance to maintaining a neutral stance while the invasion was still ongoing in Cyprus.

Centrifugal solidarity

A ground-breaking slant can be to rethink what Greece offered as a donor country independently from the mediation of transnational organisms. Whereas upon preliminary research the Greek government of Karamanlis does not appear as a pre-

⁵ Archives du Comité International de la Croix Rouge (Acicr), B Ag 280 049-051.089: Secours à Chypre. Appel du mois d'août 1974, don de l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (Oms), Telegram: «Un Relief Coordinator to Icrc», 25 juillet 1974.

⁴ Acicr, B Ag 280 049-051.024: Secours à Chypre. Contributions suite à l'appel du 21 juillet 1974 adressé aux Sociétés Nationales, don de la Croix Rouge hellénique, «Lix Simonius à Mr. Kefalas - Cr Hellénique», 24 juillet 1974.

⁵ Id., «Téléphone de MM. Kefalas reçu par Zuger», 23 juillet 1974.

⁶ Acicr, B Ag 280 049-051.024, «Lix Simonius à M. Kefalas», 24 juillet 1974.

dominant humanitarian actor, non-state actors presented occasional offers based on the availability of materials and personal contacts with transport agents. For one, fragmentary action stemmed from various parts of Greek civil society. Several primary schools gathered educational material and shipped it to the Greek Cypriot children. Knitting industries in the municipality of Piraeus sent knitted fabrics to the refugees by ship. The Greek Women Scouts dispatched clothing and the Teaching Federation of Greece raised money for food. Aid was not top-down but gathered from the rather dispersed and limited resources of civil associations. In the passage from the junta to democracy, this scattered aid may be an important signal of the construction of a Greek civil and humanitarian public identity during the forthcoming years.

Secondly, Greek aid also came from a broader geographical and cultural space, that of the Greek diaspora in the Usa and Australia, both of which remained pivotal in lobbying for the fate of Cyprus. Bank archives suggest that individual financial initiatives outweighed the temporal political and financial inertia of the government recently formed under Konstantinos Karamanlis. Instead of systematic humanitarian policymaking at the level of the Greek state, individual donors of the Greek diaspora deposited cheques for the benefit of Greek Cypriot refugees in the accounts of the Ionian and Popular Bank⁷. Like in Nattermann's case study, aid resulted from the mobilization of personal networks and con-

tacts. In turn, as in the case of the Jewish refugees, the networking of individuals also led to the formation of aid associations focusing on the Cypriot refugee crisis, which is an issue for future investigation.

The eminence of historical and religious symbols

An element found in Guardião's analysis is also present in this case study. It is the systematic appeal to «sentimental ties» highlighted by the Greek and Cypriot authorities when seeking external aid. In this case, they argued common cultural and historical bonds to claim international solidarity.

Ethnic division during the armed conflict in Cyprus reinforced the arguments of civilizational solidarity put forward by the Greek ministers and the Orthodox Church of Greece. This is because the invasion of Cyprus not only involved a series of army confrontations, but also deepened the previous crises of intra-ethnic violence. Episodes between the two communities on the island had intensified since 1955, and even more prominently since 1963. The increasing intra-ethnic conflict between Christians and Muslims made for the greater use of nationalist propaganda against the Turks as a tool to appeal for international solidarity in the face of the humanitarian emergency. The financial inefficiency of the Greek state's humanitarianism in particular left room for propaganda campaigns that emphasized the ongoing cultural solidarity between Greece and Cyprus. The

⁷ Istoriko Arxeio - Trapeza tis Ellados (Gr Iate), A6S4Y3F9: Allelografia Ypourgou Oikonomikon: Prosfores Yper ton Thymaton tou Kypriakou Agonos, 1-18.

Greek government, accompanied by the Cypriot ethnarchy, framed the refugees' humanitarian emergency as an injustice caused by the Turks against Hellenism's «civilizational right», held since ancient times, to thrive in Cyprus. The common axiom was that the Turks had unleashed unilateral violence throughout the centuries and that the Turkish state had shown aggression since the times of the Ottoman Empire. Supplementary evidence included maps with the number of Greek Cypriot villages and the greater demographic weight of the Greek Cypriot population. Notably, the Greek campaign for Cyprus put direct pressure on the members of the United Nations' Security Council. The University of Athens' Committee for Cyprus distributed a leaflet telling its readers that they could use their own influence «so that the Resolutions of the Un Security Council and the General Assembly be immediately reinforced»⁸. Moreover, in means and resources, visual evidence exceeded other forms of Greek support for Cypriot refugees. The official Greek and Greek Cypriot campaigns played on the Hellenic nation and Christianity to shape the iconology of the victims, displaced persons and destruction of the cultural heritage⁹. Mothers, children and elderly people figured in the printed material that the Cypriot ethnarchy and the Greek state circulated on a worldwide scale. Images of sleeping babies and women baking bread in traditional ovens in times of peace stood next to those of destroyed Byzantine

temples and fleeing refugees in times of war.

Cultural solidarity directed more Greek humanitarian activity towards the support of Greek Cypriot schoolchildren and young students. Backed by the visual campaign, the Orthodox Church of Greece was the first to support Greek Cypriot students. For example, immediately after the summer attacks, the metropolitan bishop of Ilia in the Peloponnese organized the hosting and schooling of 456 Greek Cypriot children in the local bishopric orphanages during the 1974-1975 school year¹⁰. Thanks to ecclesiastical coordination among the churches, other refugees travelled to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Israel. In their turn, the Greek Ministries of Education and Social Services provided a limited number of scholarships in private colleges and boarding schools in Athens for some of the displaced children. The Orthodox Church was also responsible for the establishment of the Pan-Hellenic Union for Solidarity with Cyprus (Pesk) in Athens, in coordination with the Greek Young Men's Christian Association. Pesk lobbied to gather governmental and individual aid. For instance, between August and December 1974, the Greek Ministry of Social Services donated 200,000 Greek drachmas through Pesk for the hospitalization of Greek Cypriot refugees at the Home of Cyprus (*Kypriaki Estia*) in Athens. The metropolis of Ilia hosted children for one school year and funds were deposited as one-time payments. All these gestures

⁸ Gr Iate A6S9Y7F100, Leaflet: «Must I End my Days as a Refugee? Cyprus 1974».

⁹ Gr Iate, A6S9Y7F100, Booklet: «The peacemakers of Attila», Cyprus 20 July-1 October 1974.

¹⁰ N.A. Kerkidou, *Euxaristo. Martyries Paidion tou 1974*, Lemessos, Konos, 2018.

remained of questionable duration, however: indeed, the research has yet to uncover any long-term responsiveness on the part of Greek solidarity.

Development and humanitarian «normalization»

Another facet of solidarity regards the distribution or coordination of development aid from the Greek government to the Greek Cypriot state. An important landmark in this case was Turkey's unilateral decision to name the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus on 13 February 1975. This change resulted in the formation of an internationally unrecognized *de facto* state in the northern occupied territories of the Republic of Cyprus. A month after the arbitrary naming, a group of Greek ministers paid an official visit to Cyprus. They visited refugee camps, attended mass with the archbishop Makarios and met the Pancyprian Union for Refugees (Pep). The Greek ministers approached the trauma of collective loss by strengthening cultural ties, without any concrete planning for economic recovery. Although they briefly met the Greek Cypriot ministers of the economy and social insurance in Nicosia, they did not actually carry a portfolio for economic cooperation, nor did they suggest any concrete aid development measures. Meanwhile, the Greek Ministry of Commerce watched Turkey's plans to boost exports in the occupied territories¹¹.

In the long run, the lack of financial initiative between Greece and Cyprus reduced

the possibilities of expressing solidarity through joint investments or business plans, or mutual support in the growth of core economic sectors, such as agriculture and industry. Condemnation of the prolonged refugee crisis and destroyed villages and properties prevailed over an intra-Mediterranean discourse of economic restoration. Economic solidarity thereafter took the form of lobbying to embargo Turkish trade in northern Cyprus or restore the property rights of individual Greek Cypriot claimants in international courts.

In conclusion, Greek aid to Cyprus had two sides. On the one hand, Greek humanitarianism followed the transnational obligations set out by the Unficyp to provide financial instalments to help preserve a neutral Green Line, restore peace and carry out relief operations for all the displaced populations throughout the island. On the other, Greek humanitarian actors developed autonomous material aid strategies, within the international appeal for «humanity» and resting upon a layer of older civilizational claims concerning the demographic predominance of the Greek culture and the Christian religion.

In the same way as Guardião and Salvatici's case studies in this round table, the question remains as to how the Mediterranean countries directed their autonomous channels of solidarity beyond the national responsibilities prescribed in the framework of international organizations. In the case of Greece, the search for humanitarian coordination beyond the Unficyp and

¹¹ Genika Arxeia tou Kratous – Kentriki Ypiresia (Gak), Elliniki Presveia Kyprou: Soma Emporikon Sym-boulon kai Akolouthon: Fakelos 3.

ICRC opens the doors to new parameters in the study of humanitarian diplomacy. For instance, cultural connotations marked a clear distinction between the Greek humanitarians and the above transnational institutions. The Greek religious humanitarian agents presented similar cultural and national arguments through the period extending from the Cyprus Emergency (1955-1959) to the 1974 Turkish invasion in order to expose the injustice of the Turkish state. Their aim – to accuse the Turkish nation while raising humanitarian awareness for the Greek Cypriot refugees – remained distant from the intentions and

logistics of the Unficyp or the Red Cross in Geneva.

The ongoing diplomatic stalemate protracted the refugee crisis in Cyprus and provoked the «normalization» of the humanitarian *status quo*, resulting in a permanent partition and Green Line¹². This feature of permanence sheds new light on the role that the Greek government, army and civil society played, not only in providing refugees humanitarian aid, but also in facilitating the international diplomatic dialogue around the settlement of the Cyprus question during the most critical period of 1974 to 1976.

Kalliopi Geronymaki, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, via delle Pandette 32, 50127 Firenze

kalliopi.geronymaki@unifi.it

Orcid: 0009-0006-0002-1065

Francesca Rolandi

The 1976 Friuli Earthquake and Yugoslav Aid: Practising Solidarity, Reframing Hierarchies and Looking for New Markets through Humanitarian

Until recently, the flourishing literature on humanitarianism has hesitated to touch upon Cold War eastern Europe. Furthermore, studies on humanitarian initiatives

and practices in state socialism have been focused either on the domestic dimension or the global reach of aid and development projects¹. In particular, Yugoslavia's

¹² G. Ioannou, *The Normalisation of Cyprus' Partition Among Greek Cypriots: Political Economy and Political Culture in a Divided Society*, Glasgow, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

¹ Y. Denéchère, *Eastern Europe: A New Field of Humanitarian History*, «Eastern Journal of European Studies», 2014, 5, 2; N. Richardson-Little, H. Dietz, J. Mark, *New Perspectives on Socialism and Human Rights in East Central Europe since 1945: Introduction to the Thematic Issue*, «East Central Europe», 2019, 46, 2-3; J.

engagement in the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement has recently been approached from a plurality of angles². In this case, solidarity was fostered by political allegiances with countries and liberation movements which, at least declaratively, shared the main core values on which the Yugoslav political experiment lay. Attention to Yugoslavia as a donor has contributed to reframing its position against the Cold War backdrop, which until recently had been obfuscated by the abrupt transformation of the post-Yugoslav countries into recipients of aid as of the 1990s. However, it has also brought contradictions between professed internationalist postulates and existing race-driven biases to the fore³.

This contribution aims to reframe Yugoslavia's position within the international humanitarian arena by expanding the investigation of its solidarity networks. Aid was not dispatched exclusively along the North-South trajectory, but also circulated horizontally, between southern European countries. As this contribution will explore, Yugoslavia delivered relief to Italy after the 1976 earthquake which hit the border region of Friuli and played a role in the following reconstruction process.

This episode of humanitarian diplomacy was not the first case of cooperation between Italy and Yugoslavia. Since the 1960s, the two national Red Cross societies had delivered emergency relief to the neighbouring country in the aftermath of natural disasters. The Yugoslav Red Cross sent aid to Italy after the flooding that affected Friuli and Florence in 1966 and the earthquake that hit Sicily in 1968, while the Italian Red Cross sent aid to Yugoslavia after the 1963 earthquake in Skopje, the 1964 flooding in Zagreb and the earthquakes in Debar (1967) and Banjaluka (1969)⁴.

These instances of mutual solidarity have to be inserted in the new climate triggered by the improvement of relations between Italy and Yugoslavia after the decade of confrontation which followed the end of Second World War. Recent scholarship has shed light on the so-called «Adriatic détente», a definition that captures the rapprochement between Italy and Yugoslavia culminating in the 1975 Osimo Treaty, which marked a permanent settlement of the border issue⁵. After 1945, the two countries had been divided by opposing territorial claims to the Upper Adriatic territories, which threatened to escalate into an open confrontation in the early 1950s. How-

Mark, P. Betts (eds.), *Socialism Goes Global: the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization*, Oxford, UK-New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2022.

² P. Stubbs (ed.), *Socialist Yugoslavia and the Non-Aligned Movement: Social, Cultural, Political, and Economic Imaginaries*, Montreal-Kingston-London-Chicago, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023.

³ C. Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region: Postsocialist, Post-Conflict, Postcolonial? Theory for a Global Age*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2018; J. Subotic, S. Vucetic, *Performing Solidarity: Whiteness and Status-seeking in the Non-Aligned World*, «Journal of International Relations and Development», 2019, 22, 13.

⁴ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Crveni Krst Jugoslavije (731), k. 456, Informacija o Italijanskom Crvenom Krstu, 4.

⁵ K. Ruzicic-Kessler, *Italy and Yugoslavia: From Distrust to Friendship in Cold War Europe*, «Journal of Modern Italian Studies», 2014, 19, 5; M. Bucarelli, L. Micheletta, L. Monzali, L. Riccardi (eds.), *Italy and Tito's Yugoslavia in the Age of International Détente*, Brussels, Ple Peter Lang, 2016.

ever, from 1954, the temporary settlement of the border issue permitted by the London Memorandum prompted a network of close economic, cultural and political ties which anticipated and paved the way to the political thaw. From the 1960s, the renewed cooperation benefitted from a more conciliative attitude of the centre-left Italian governments, as well as the need of the Yugoslav government to settle the territorial question as soon as possible in order to counter the discontent arising in Slovenia and Croatia. Even before the Osimo Treaty, the cooperation between Italy and Yugoslavia had reached such a level that it was customary to define their bilateral relations as a «model of peaceful cooperation between two countries governed by different social and political systems belonging to the same geographical area»⁶.

However, while the Osimo Treaty might be seen as the height of the rapprochement process, it did not fulfil all of the many expectations that it had set in motion. Despite the increasingly popular narrative on friendship between the two countries and the porousness of the Italo-Yugoslav border, from the mid-1970s onwards the relations between Italy and Yugoslavia experienced some setbacks, with mutual suspicion rising in both countries. In particular, in the Italian border zone, the rapprochement with Yugoslavia started being seen as a Trojan horse, hiding irredentist purposes

with respect to the Slovenian minority and increasing Yugoslav interference via economic initiatives⁷.

Yugoslavian aid after the earthquake

Less than six months had passed since the signing of the Osimo agreement, when a devastating earthquake hit the Friuli region and to a lesser extent, the Slovenian border zones. In a few minutes, just short of one thousand people lost their lives, and roughly eighty to one hundred thousand individuals lost their homes and belongings. The situation was made even more severe by a long series of aftershocks which lasted several months. Although itself stricken by the earthquake in its northwestern bordering areas, Yugoslavia was among the first countries to engage in emergency aid. In the aftermath of the first quake, in May 1976, it delivered equipment such as tents, blankets, water and medications, as well as medical personnel. It was in particular the adjoining republics of Slovenia and Croatia, as well as the city of Skopje, which engaged firsthand. Not only goods, but knowledge circulated too. A team of experts in seismology from Skopje were sent to Italy to support the process of preserving and securing the buildings damaged by the earthquake, a move aimed at symbolizing international plans for Skopje's reconstruction and recovery. In fact, the Institute of

⁶ M. Bucarelli, *Détente in the Adriatic: Italian Foreign Policy and the Road to the Osimo Treaty*, in M. Bucarelli, L. Micheletta, L. Monzali, L. Riccardi (eds.), *Italy and Tito's Yugoslavia in the Age of International Détente*, cit., p. 217.

⁷ D. D'Amelio, *Imperfect Normalization. The Political Repercussions of the Treaty of Osimo*, in M. Bucarelli, L. Micheletta, L. Monzali, L. Riccardi (eds.), *Italy and Tito's Yugoslavia in the Age of International Détente*, cit.

Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology, created in 1965 on the joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (Undp) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), epitomized the principles of technological advancement, solidarity and self-reliance that were to be implemented in post-earthquake Skopje, thus drawing a lesson from the tragic event which had hit the city⁸.

Against a backdrop of broad international commitment, Yugoslav aid continued in the following phase with the delivery of prefabricated houses. Within a year from the earthquake, Yugoslav companies had supplied 3,400 prefabricated houses which provided temporary accommodation for circa ten thousand individuals⁹. Traces of this endeavour are still present in the local toponymy, as witnessed by the Krivaja neighbourhood, named after the Bosnian company which delivered a sizeable number of prefabricated houses. In August 1977, the Yugoslav government approved an additional donation of 60 million dinars (3 billion liras) for the reconstruction of destroyed buildings¹⁰.

This instance of humanitarian diplomacy was presented by the Yugoslav authorities as the natural outcome of the new path of good neighbourly relations between Italy and Yugoslavia, as well as evidence of the

gratitude prompted by the aid that Italy had sent to Skopje in 1963. However, its relevance was even more striking when seen in terms of hierarchies, and the attempts on both sides to negotiate the asymmetrical relationship traditionally attached to the donor-recipient pairing.

As a matter of international prestige, Yugoslavia strove to impose itself as a prominent aid giver. By providing post-disaster relief, the country aimed to challenge an entanglement of political and nationalist prejudices. Indeed, especially in the Italian border zones, the widespread image of low quality that was attached to what was produced in state socialism intertwined with deeply rooted anti-Slavic prejudices. Sources show that Yugoslavia was preoccupied not only with delivering effective aid but also with its workers leaving a positive impression. A report from the Yugoslav consulate in Trieste praised the fact that despite there being over one thousand five hundred workers in the area of Faedis, no negative remark had been reported on their behaviour. As the Yugoslav consul in Trieste put it, «In this way, with their civilized and friendly behaviour, the Yugoslav workers had confuted any rumour about *balkanici* and gave an invaluable contribution to the affirmation of our country»¹¹.

However, the Yugoslav aid acquired additional meaning when zooming in from

⁸ Lj. Spaskovska, *Constructing the «City of International Solidarity»: Non-Aligned Internationalism, the United Nations and Visions of Development, Modernism and Solidarity, 1955–1975*, «Journal of World History», 2020, 31, 1, pp. 154–155.

⁹ Diplomatski arhiv Ministarstva spoljnih poslova (Dampsp), Politička arhiva (Pa), Italia, 1977, fasc. 58, d. 7, 427925.

¹⁰ Dampsp, Pa Italia, 1977, fasc. 58, d. 7, 445565, P. Angelillo, *Aiuti per tre miliardi dalla Jugoslavia al Friuli terremotato*, «Il Gazzettino», 12 agosto 1977.

¹¹ Dampsp, Pa Italia, 1977, fasc. 58, d. 7, 419649.

a state-to-state to a regional perspective. In fact, as some of the earthquake-stricken areas, such as the Natisone valley, were inhabited by ethnic Slovenes, the reconstruction process became a Slovenian matter within the Yugoslav Federation, with the Republic of Slovenia – and the Yugoslav consulate in Trieste as its emissary – acting as a kin-state, and the organizations of the Slovenian minority as on-the-ground actors. Plans for the reconstruction ranged from the rebuilding of destroyed infrastructures to the erection of cultural facilities for the Slovenian population. In this case, aid was seen as an opportunity to foster the presence of the Slovenian minority in the public space. Speaking at a ceremony in San Pietro al Natisone (Špeter), a local recipient of a prefabricated house stated in the local Slovenian dialect that this «act of the people and the Executive Committee of the Republic of Slovenia represented one step forward in the national awakening of the population»¹². The idea of strengthening the relations with the Slovenian minority through Yugoslav humanitarian engagement raised concerns among the Italian authorities, who strove to hold the reins of the aid and decide where it was to be allocated¹³.

On both sides, political and economic preoccupations went hand in hand. In Italy, Yugoslav intervention was feared not only in political terms, but also as economic in-

terference. Indeed, right from the start, aid to the earthquake-hit areas of Friuli was not detached from pragmatic reasoning. In 1977, the Yugoslav consulate in Trieste viewed it as a tool to open up future economic opportunities for Yugoslav companies in the Italian border area¹⁴. Although a thorough investigation would be needed into this issue, it seems that the continuing Yugoslav presence on the Friuli economic landscape was a legacy of the earthquake, even beyond the original intentions. This was especially the case of the informal labour market, with numerous cross-border workers employed in the construction industry¹⁵. Nonetheless, the Italian authorities' fear of a more structured Yugoslav economic penetration into the border area remained constant, at least until the early 1980s¹⁶.

As this contribution has argued, the Yugoslav response to the 1976 earthquake in Friuli is telling for a set of reasons, bringing together strategic, geopolitical and economic preoccupations. First, it was a prominent instance of relief circulating westwards. By providing effective aid to its western neighbour, Yugoslavia aimed to impose itself as a partner on an equal footing. While showcasing the degree of détente and coordination existing in the Adriatic area, it also attempted to counter biases nurtured by Italy towards its eastern neighbour. Second, the Yugoslav political agenda behind this case

¹² Damsp, Pa, Italia, 1977, fasc. 58, d. 7, 415285.

¹³ Damsp, Pa, Italia, 1977, fasc. 58, d. 7, 427244.

¹⁴ Damsp, Pa, Italia, 1977, fasc. 58, d. 7, 427925.

¹⁵ Archivio centrale dello Stato (Acs), Ministero dell'Interno (Mi), Gabinetto, 1976-80, b. 351, M.B., *Clandestini, ormai un esercito*, «Il Sole 24 ore», 12 Settembre 1985, p. 6.

¹⁶ Acs, Mi, Gabinetto, 1976-80, b. 298.

of humanitarian diplomacy changed according to scale. The fact that the Republic of Slovenia used aid to strengthen its ties with the Slovenian ethnic minority became a matter of particular concern for the Italian authorities. Rather than being passive recipients, the Italian authorities strove to channel and keep a control over the aid. Third, as happened in other instances, it was clear in the minds of the main Yugoslav actors that the aid had to develop into

a tool to open up new room for economic initiatives and for Yugoslav companies to explore new market opportunities. Finally, this particular case of humanitarian diplomacy argues for the need not to approach area studies as sealed boxes, but to consider countries at the intersection of different regions. This might provide fresh insights into the history of Yugoslavia as a country that participated in several trends overlapping between eastern and southern Europe.

Francesca Rolandi, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, via delle Pandette 32, 50127 Firenze
francesca.rolandi@unifi.it
Orcid: 0000-0003-2790-9575

