

GETTING TO KNOW
THE GREAT WAR
IN FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA 1914

Peoples in arms

Societât
Filologjiche
Furlane



Società
Filologica
Friulana



Getting to know the Great War in Friuli Venezia Giulia 1914 Peoples in arms

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REGIONE AUTONOMA
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA



Deputation of National History for Friuli
Institute for Central European Cultural Encounters
Slovenian Research Institute
Institute of Social and Religious History
Comprehensive Institute of Aiello del Friuli
Comprehensive Institute of Cormòns
Comprehensive Institute of Mariano del Friuli
Comprehensive Institute of San Vito al Tagliamento
Comprehensive Institute of Tavagnacco
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Comprehensive Institute of Udine 3



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PEOPLES IN ARMS

"If today we ask ourselves with a quiet reflection why Europe in 1914 went to war, we can't find a reasonable cause and practically any determining factor.

It was not about conflicting ideas and there were hardly any border issues. I can't find any other reason than an excess of strength, a tragic consequence of that inner dynamism accumulated over the previous forty years and urging for a violent outburst.

Each Country was suddenly aware of its strength, forgetting that the neighbouring States had a nearly equal pride; everyone wanted more and wanted something from the other. The worst of it was that feeling, so dear to us, that deceived us entirely: our shared optimism. (...) and it was on June 28, 1914 that we heard the pistol shot in Sarajevo, which in a single moment shattered, as if it were an empty pot, the world of security and creative reason, in which we had education and dwelling."

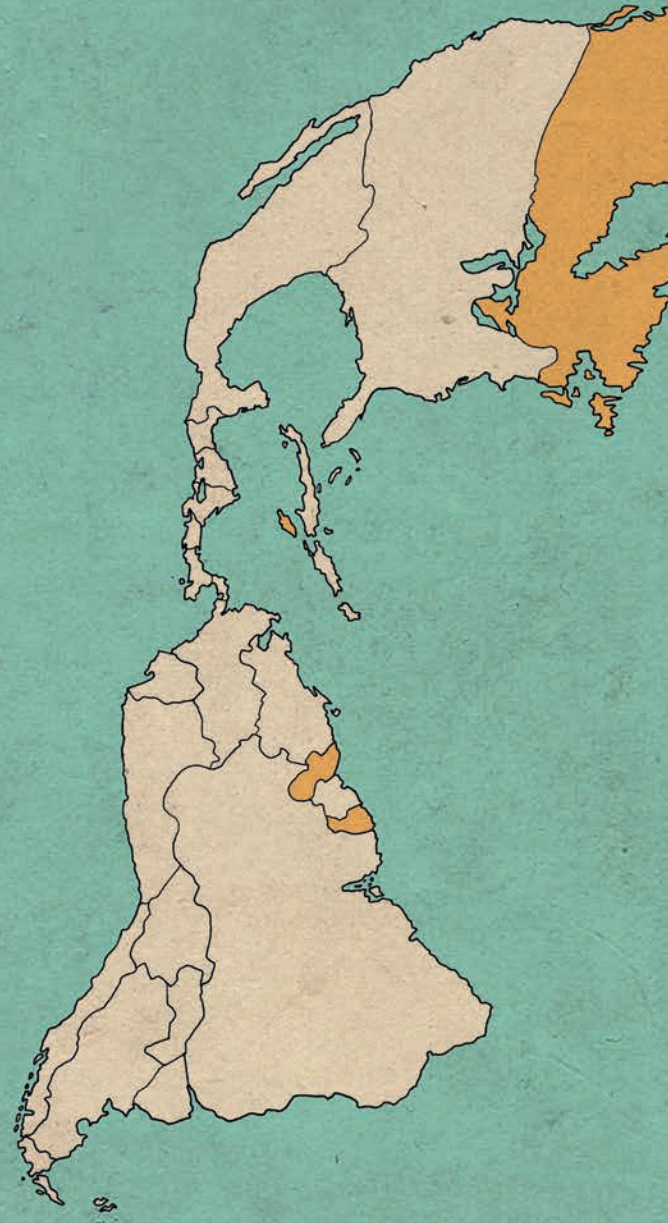
From STEFAN ZWEIG

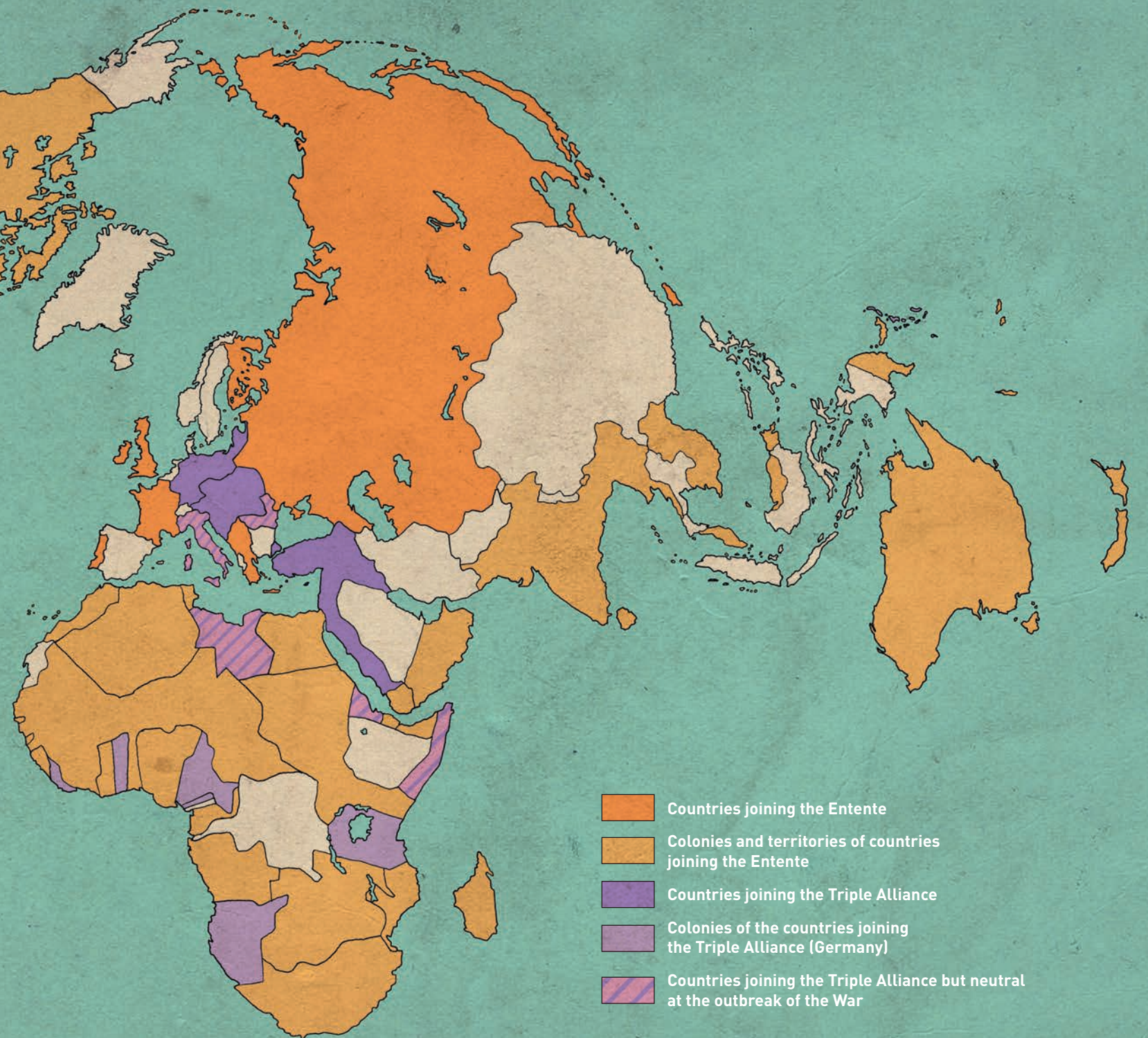
Die Welt von Gestern. Erinnerungen eines Europäers,
(The world of yesterday. Memories of a European)
Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1942.

With this lucid evaluation, Austrian writer Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) tried to summarise the reasons that led to the first mass war of the twentieth century, a tragedy that did not happen suddenly, almost accidentally, caused in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914 by the shots of a young Serb, but was the result of a crisis that had deep roots in the relations between European countries.

THE WORLD AND EUROPE IN 1914

Looking at the political map of the world in 1914 one can clearly see that the various European states were controlling a large part of the planet, through a policy of colonial expansion that, following a long maturation, had then arrived at a truly global stage. A closer look at the map of Europe in those years reveals the presence of large multinational states like the Russian Empire, the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire. These vast empires were formed by a group of peoples with different languages, religions and cultures, united under the same rules and by common institutional structures (such as the army or the bureaucracy). Over time, in order to ensure their coexistence, central authorities had had to grant some form of autonomy and thus meet the aspirations of freedom and national affirmation getting increasingly popular among the middle and working classes. The map of Europe reveals a dense network of small and medium national states (such as Serbia,







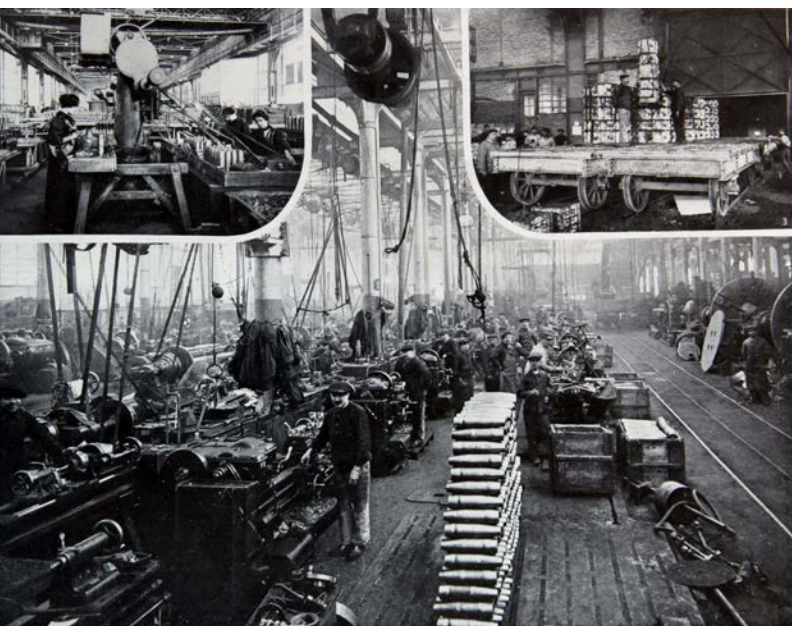
Bulgaria, Romania, Italy itself) that, located like satellites around large imperial blocks, attained independence during the second half of the nineteenth century, in the wake of the triumph of liberal principles and national uprisings. They were led by a dynamic ruling class, eager to expand the borders at the expense of neighbouring countries, in order to include all members of the respective nationalities. For example, the government of Rome aspired to annex the Austrian provinces inhabited by Italians (Trentino, Gorizia and Gradisca, Trieste, part of Istria and Dalmatia) and the same was true for Serbia or Romania in respect of Austrian and Hungarian regions populated by Serbs and Romanians. Almost everywhere, everyone's claims intertwined deteriorating more and more the relationships between neighbouring countries.

The growing development of industry and com-

**During the nineteenth century,
the idea that a national community
should also be matched
by an independent state
matured and started spreading.**

merce - the second industrial revolution - had also determined colonial expansion worldwide by the larger European nations, making sure that in a short time large parts of Asia and most of Africa depended on Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain. A European





French factory of artillery ammunition.

presence was also strong in America and Oceania. This expansion transformed the economy of our continent: between the end of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century, the quality of life of the middle class grew and the introduction of universal male suffrage (in Austria in 1907, in Italy in 1912) widened the political participation of broad segments of the population.

Also literature, music and the visual arts helped a development of civilization that seemed unstoppable; and the fears and warnings of few but lucid intellectuals (including Angelo Vivante from Trieste) did not disturb the general confidence in the progress of science and technology.

The absence of armed clashes between the major powers, after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, left hope for a bright future, where conflicts could at most affect distant regions or circumscribed areas; yet - a notable contradiction - the arms industry experienced a period of significant expansion.

These were the "good days" (*Belle Époque* in French) that saw the success, in the opinion of Europeans, of the illusion of a new century of prosperity and peace, when instead humanity was rapidly heading towards a massacre of unprecedented proportions, the most impressive in the history of the wars known until then.

In this frame of optimism started the "suicide" of a continent that chose to take the road of self-destruction: since then, Europe never regained the centrality on the world stage that had characterized it in the previous centuries.

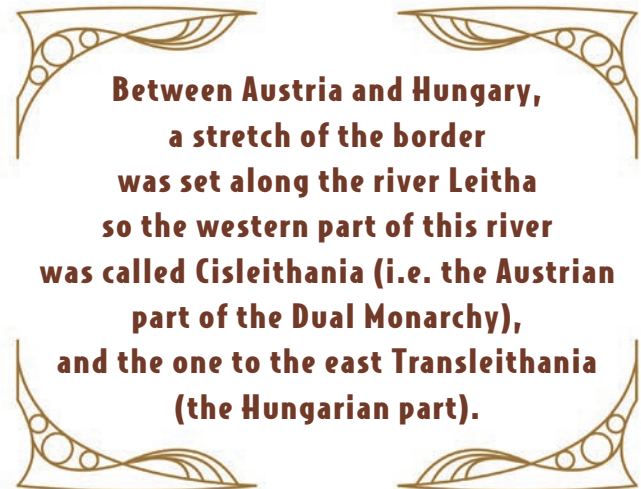
AUSTRIA AND THE BALKANS ON THE EVE OF THE CONFLICT

The history of Central Europe is marked by the presence of a complex and varied state entity, far from uniform, which began to take shape in the Middle Ages thanks to the house of Habsburg; for simplicity, this is often referred to as Austria, but it would be more correct to refer to it as the Habsburg domains. These were in fact a set of territories, each with its own traditions, laws and autonomies that with great effort, between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, the Habsburgs were trying to harmonise into a compact and modern statehood.

After the constitutional reform of 1867, the state ruled by the Habsburgs was institutionally composed of two parts, two autonomous entities with equal dignity that had some common institutional structures, namely **Austria** (the so-called **Cisleithania**) and **Hungary** (the **Transleithania**).

For this reason this entity is indicated henceforth as **Dual Monarchy** or **Austria-Hungary**. The figure of the monarch (emperor in Austria and king in Hun-

gary) was a point of unity for a very articulate institutional complex.



Like and perhaps more than in other European countries at the time, the internal framework of nationalities was extremely complex. In the Hungarian



Bohemia

Prague

Troppau

Silesia

Moravia

Brno

Upper
Austria

Linz

Vienna

Lower Austria

Salzburg

Bregenz

Vorarlberg

Innsbruck

Salzburg

Styria

Graz

Tyrol

Carinthia

Klagenfurt

Budapest

Hungary

Gorizia

Ljubljana

Carniola

Trieste

Zagreb

Croatia and Slavonia

Coastline

Parenzo

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dalmatia

Split

Sarajevo



Austria and Hungary in 1908:
it indicates the capitals of the regions
that made up the empire

part of the Dual Monarchy, Hungarians constituted about half of the population, which included, in lesser numbers, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Croats, Romanians, Serbs and Germans; in the Austrian part there was a real mosaic of peoples, including Germans, Italians, Friulians, Slovenes, Croats, Czechs, Ukrainians, Poles, Romanians. In a time when national claims were becoming the subject of political struggle, this quite uneven situation was potentially explosive. The reigning Emperor in 1914 was Franz Joseph I, who had ascended the throne at just eighteen years of age in 1848, at a time of great turbulence, as if to mark a need for change that reflected the innovative spirit of the time. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century the Empire was going through a time of economic expansion: commercial traffic, by sea and land, was favoured by a class of entrepreneurs who hoped to leverage Austria's position, as well as invest in new industrial activities. These trades had an important centre in the free port of Trieste. Not always this dynamism was met by an adequate economic policy by the State, which turned out to be pretty slow in the construction of infrastructure (railways in the first place) needed to support economic growth.

From the political and military standpoint, not always the fate of the war effort had smiled on Austria. After losing Lombardy (1859) and Veneto (1866) to Piedmont, which had thus been able to form (in 1861) a new state, the Kingdom of Italy. Austria, with its hegemony lost in the Italian peninsula, was increasingly looking to the Balkan peninsula for land expansion, to the detriment of the Ottoman Empire now in gradual disintegration. Many wars and riots inflamed the Balkans during the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1878, following the Treaty of Berlin that put an end to one of these clashes, Austria was able to gain control of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the central region of the peninsula, inhabited by Serbs (Orthodox), Croats



(Catholics) and Bosnians (Muslims); the assignment of this region to Austria-Hungary provoked new uprisings that followed those that had brought the region to break away from the Ottoman Empire. An acceleration of the process occurred when this region was formally annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908,

sparking protests in Serbia, as well as the discontent of Serbs and Muslim.

The weakness of the Ottoman Empire had allowed other regions in the area to become autonomous states: first Greece in 1830, then the small Montenegro (independent principality in 1852 and kingdom in



1910) and finally Serbia, independent from 1878 and kingdom from 1882, while Bulgaria became a kingdom in 1908. The populations of Slavic language that lived inside the Dual Monarchy had different aspirations, also connected to the historical path that they had crossed.



Trieste celebrating the 60th anniversary of the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria on June 12, 1908.

Trieste at the beginning of the twentieth century.





VIENNA, VIEW OF THE OPERA FROM THE RING

**A historian of Czech origin,
Miroslav Hroch, identified
three stages in the maturation
of the national identity of these peoples:**

**1st,
some strive to give organic unity to
a language and a common cultural perception**

**2nd,
this language is codified,
a national literature is born
and the idea of identity spreads**

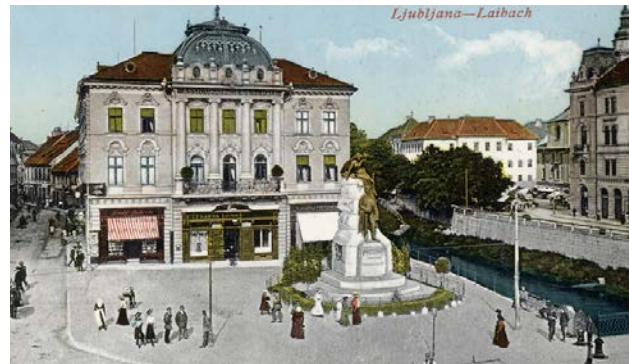
**3rd,
national identity becomes
a mass political claim**

Among some of the peoples the bond of subjection to the house of Habsburg was deeply rooted, to the point of not being generally questioned (like with the Slovenes). For others the aspiration to an autonomous state entity was increasingly shared.

During the nineteenth century the idea had matured that a community having common traditions, language and culture should be able to recognise itself in an autonomous state entity.

The Italian example was there for all to see: its national identity was recognised, and this supported the process of creation of the new Kingdom of Italy.

For Italians in Austria the situation was more complex: some had been subjects of the Habsburgs for centuries, others had become so at the beginning of the nineteenth century.



Postcards of the beginning of the century:
Pola, Gorizia, Ljubljana.

The ideal of reunification to what was considered the mother country was having a particular success in formerly Venetian areas, like Istria and Dalmatia.

THE COAST AND FRIULI

From the administrative standpoint, the “Coast” (*Küstenland*) was one of the 15 regions that made up the Austrian part of the Dual Monarchy (Cisleithania) and was in turn made up of three autonomous territorial entities, divided into twelve “political districts”: the Prince County of Gorizia and Gradisca, the Margraviate of Istria and the “immediate city” of Trieste (surface: 7,969 sq.km.). The main local political authority resided in the Lieutenant of the Coast, as the representative of the Emperor. According to the official census of 1910, the total population amounted to 894,568 inhabitants, of whom nearly 230,000 concentrated in Trieste, a city which also had the important role of main port of the Danubian empire; Pola (58,562 inhabitants), in Istria, was the central port of the Austrian Navy. Within the boundaries of this region lived people of different language and culture: Italians (356,590, 46% of the total population, including Friulians) were the absolute or relative majority in major cities and towns of eastern Friuli, in Gorizia,

Monfalcone, Trieste and in the urban centres of the Istrian coast and the islands of Cherso, Lussino and Veglia; along with the presence, constantly increasing, of citizens of the kingdom of Italy, - known as “subjects of the Kingdom,” according to the terminology of the time - emigrated in search of work, often seasonal (about 70,000 on the eve of the war). Slovenes (266,852, 31%) were the majority of the inhabitants of the Collio, the valleys of the rivers Isonzo and Vipacco, to the ends of Trieste’s Karst and Northern Istria; internal and eastern Istria saw the dominance of the Croatian population (170,549, 21%), although there were other small minorities of ancient settlement (like the Istrian-Romanians). There was also a sizeable German colony (29,610, 2%). If in the commercial hub of Trieste the main economic activ-

Geographic Atlas for general popular schools and for city schools of the Coast (Trieste, Gorizia-Gradisca and Istria) described by Michele Stenta, Vienna, early twentieth century.





Emigrants working in German brick factories.

ity was linked to trade and maritime traffic, in Gorizia the population was largely devoted to agriculture: small property was widespread in mountain areas, in the plains the latifundium prevailed, cultivated by medium or small owners or renters (sharecroppers, settlers); in Istria, the coastal area was living out of fishing and maritime trade, unlike the internal area that was tied to very poor subsistence agriculture.

The industry was in its infancy, with the development of shipbuilding (Monfalcone, Trieste) and textile production (Gorizia).

The upper social component (large landowners, urban middle class, intellectual elites) flowed politically into the national liberal party, with an separationist flair, dominant in Italian centres since the second half of the nineteenth century and representing “a small, though influential, minority” (L. Fabi).

After the introduction of universal male suffrage (1907), the underprivileged classes were represented by the Catholic Christian Social movement, flourishing in the Friulian countryside, or, with significant growth, in the Socialist Party in the shipyards of Monfalcone and in the quarries of Nabresina (Aurisina today); two ideologies distant from each other, but united by the aspiration to raise the precarious living conditions of farmers and those engaged in other productive activities.

**Large landowners,
owners of most agricultural land,
relied on “settlers” or “tenants”
who cultivated the land
and were required to pay to the owner
either by part of their crop
or a share previously established
according to the different types
of contract they had signed.**

The province of Udine (at the time including western Friuli) had joined the Kingdom of Italy in 1866 and counted 628,081 inhabitants (1911), all Friulian, except for the Slovenian settlements in the eastern valleys (Resia and Natisone), numerically a minority, as well as the Venetian areas of Pordenone, Sacile and Marano.

Half of the Friulian families was employed in the primary sector, with very similar characteristics to the Habsburg Friuli: on the right bank of the Tagliamento river sharecropping was prevalent, on the left mixed rental, but many were the “sottani”, who owned plots so small that they needed other jobs in order to survive: they fuelled the strong emigration (in 1914 83,000 people emigrated abroad, typically employed in the building industry and in high demand) that was interpreted as the decisive reason for Friuli’s lack of development.

The few industrial activities consisted in the processing of agricultural products and the people employed there were a very small number (just 27,165 units) compared to the total of workers.

From the political standpoint, those who could participate in the elections were a small percentage of the male population, much of which was absent for many months a year due to emigration. In the elections of 1913 the Friulians elected to the Italian parliament belonged almost entirely to the moderate liberal wing, while Catholics and socialists were excluded. It can be objectively recognised that the two parts of Friuli, Austrian and Italian, were characterised by very different socio-economic and political conditions, with the first more advanced in terms of quality of life.

IRREDENTISM:

**political-cultural movement
that spread throughout Europe
from the nineteenth century,
characterised by the tendency towards
political unity, within the borders
of a single state, of people belonging
to the same nation but still subject
to a different state sovereignty.
It was joined by the bourgeoisies
of young national states born
in the Risorgimento, or those aspiring
to full independence and unity:
Italy, Serbia, Romania, Poland,
Bulgaria, Greece.**





THE ATTACK OF SARAJEVO

On June 28, 1914, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, Franz Ferdinand (nephew of Emperor Franz Joseph, son of his brother Charles Louis) and his wife Sophie were visiting Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a city where Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats and Bosnian Muslims had been living alongside each other for centuries.

He had become heir to the imperial throne after the tragic death of the only son of the emperor. A complex personality, who suffered the strict rules of protocol, as much as to marry for love a “simple” Countess, Franz Ferdinand had shown sympathies for the tri-alist solution of the monarchy, which proposed the creation of a third state entity under the Habsburg dynasty that would collect the Slavic peoples of the Dual Monarchy.

Franz Ferdinand chose to visit Sarajevo on a particular day: on June 28, memorial day of Saint Vitus (Vidovdan) according to the Orthodox calendar, the Serbs remembered the defeat at Kosovo Polje (Field of Blackbirds), which in 1389 had marked the end of the autonomous Serbian reign and the beginning of Ottoman rule.

This visit inflamed some members of Bosnian Serbs: for many of them the right placement of that land was not within Austria-Hungary but in the Kingdom of Serbia. A group of young Bosnians took the opportunity of this visit to commit an act of extraordinary impact: assassinate the heir to the throne of the hated Austria.

The young man, not yet twenty years old (he was born July 13, 1894), who actually managed to shoot the Archduke was named Gavrilo Princip and was originally from a small village in western Bosnia. As a boy he had moved to Sarajevo to attend high school; here he had been in contact with the most radical student groups, supporters of the national ideal of Serbia as well as of socialist and revolutionary tendencies. In 1912 he escaped to Belgrade where he further developed his nationalist ideal.

On June 5, 1914 Princip had arrived in Sarajevo from Belgrade with guns and bombs; the group of conspirators had imagined several ways to succeed in their intent.

Actually, on June 28 the perpetrators detonated a bomb at the procession of the Archduke while it was crossing the city, but without causing consequences. But when the Archduke, after a brief ceremony at the City Hall, left, his vehicle took the wrong way, and, apparently by chance, Princip who found himself at a short distance from the Archduke fired, killing him and his wife. The attacker was immediately arrested along with his accomplices.

The first reaction within Austria-Hungary was of great mourning. The coffins with the two corpses were brought by ship to Trieste and then moved onto a train that reached Vienna for a state funeral. This attack led Austria to issue an ultimatum to Serbia, considered the moral instigator of the murder.

THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR: THE GAME OF ALLIANCES

Among the causes that led to the outbreak of the First World War, historians agree in indicating the role played by the advance of new players on the international stage. From the late nineteenth century, while the British dominance was overshadowed by the affirmation of powerful rivals such as Germany and the United States of America, the race for hegemony on land and sea had led to the inevitable clash of interests of the various powers, creating a climate of growing mistrust between the various countries of the European mosaic. This led to the gradual formation of strategic and defensive alliances that on the eve of the war saw Europe divided into two opposing blocks. On one side the **Triple Alliance**, founded in 1882 by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy to promote the free progress of the nascent economic and military power of Germany. On the opposite side, Britain, France and Russia created the **Entente**, closed nearly thirty years later, which united very different countries on a political and cultural level yet united

by the purpose to block, through encirclement, the Germanic expansion considered dangerous for European order. During the nineteenth century, from the rubble of the decaying Ottoman Empire arose the small Balkan states that tsarist Russia supported in many ways, with the desire to replace the Austro-Hungarian and German hegemony on the Slavic peoples of Central and South Eastern Europe.

Why did the clash happen? The answer is not immediate, because the reasons were many and varied. It is enough to remember the presence of political and economic rivalries, old and new, and the spread of nationalist ideologies exacerbated by a fast spreading economic and financial crisis, combined with a widespread attitude that sought in the war the opportunity to resolve the problems of a rapidly changing society; all this fuelled a climate of uncertainty and suspicion that led to the breaking of an increasingly fragile balance. Maybe few, among the rulers of 1914, really wanted the war, but it is



Franz Joseph - Austria



George V - England



Wilhelm II - Germany



Nicholas II - Russia



Mohammed V - Ott. Empire



R. Poincaré - France

equally true that almost nobody firmly believed in peace and strove to maintain it effectively.

Before the outbreak of the war the **Triple Alliance**, established by treaties signed between 1882 and 1912, included: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and, between 1883-1888, Romania. After the beginning of hostilities, while Italy remained neutral, the Ottoman Empire entered the war on the side of the Alliance. The **Entente** was a network of bilateral alliances, concluded from 1891 to 1907, between France, Russia and Great Britain, including the respective colonial possessions. With the war it was joined, in the Far East, by Japan.

The attack in which the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne lost his life was the spark that ignited a powder keg. Probably, in other situations it would have caused a limited and short-lived conflict; on the contrary, the conflict between Austria and Serbia triggered the mechanism of alliances and accelerated an unstoppable arms race that spread with the rapidity of a fire. On July 28 1914, the government of Vienna declared war to Belgrade. Russia intervened to defend

the small Serbian kingdom, to which it was linked by linguistic, religious and cultural affinities. So it was that on August 1 Germany went to war against Russia and on August 3 against France, followed by the declaration of war by Britain to the German Empire on August 4. Later, in November, also the Ottoman Empire opened hostilities against the forces of the Entente. For the moment, the kingdom of Italy chose not to participate in the fight alongside the Austro-German allies, because of lack of military readiness, while the country was divided between neutralists (who wanted to keep the country out of the war) and interventionists (who instead pressed for participation on the side of the Entente). The majority of the latter justified the change of alliance to wrest from Austria the provinces inhabited by Italians and complete the process of national unification started in 1859-1861, but the public remained in the balance between the two positions, while diplomats of both parties came forward to bring the kingdom of Savoy on their side with promises of territorial compensation.





TRIESTE, PIAZZA GRANDE

THE MOBILISATION

In 1914 only, the four Great Powers sent to the front a total of nearly three and a half million soldiers, a figure unequalled in history: in fact, next to the professional soldiers, now thousands of farmers, workers, students (in short, all categories of citizens) were called to wear the uniform.

The organisation of an army for war went through the mobilisation, or the call to arms of those who were fit for combat. Each army was made up of conscripts, who had to do compulsory military service, officers, and, in case of war, the recalled, i.e. those who were fit for military service and who were called up on special occasions. These were joined by the volunteers.

So in the Dual Monarchy, on July 28, 1914, following the declaration of war on Serbia, Emperor Franz Joseph issued the proclamation that began mass mobilisation.

In Austria, compulsory military service was introduced in 1867, and men between 18 and 33 were asked to perform it both in the army and in the ter-

ritorial militias. There were also reinforcements consisting of older men (between 34 and 55). The Austro-Hungarian armed forces were formed by the common army (*K.u.K. gemeinsames Heer*) and by the imperial navy (*K.u.K. Kriegsmarine*). Then there were the so-called territorial militia. However, they were different for Austria (the *Landwehr*) and Hungary (the *Honvéd*). Following the mobilisation of 1914, Austria fielded a force of 6 armies: initially the first four were deployed on the Russian front in Galicia, the remaining two on the Serb front.

Each army was composed of several corps (18 in total). Each of them was formed by different units according to a very articulate hierarchical scheme. The bulk of the troops was composed of 110 infantry regiments (one regiment had at most 4,600 men), plus the cavalry regiments, artillery (particularly important in this war), aviation and other logistical support troops. Trieste was the headquarters of the 97th regiment, and the first destination of all those who had been

ABBONAMENTI:

	Anno	Sem.	Trim.
Gorizia	Cor. 16	Cor. 8	Cor. 4.
Monarchia	20	10	5.
Estero	42	21	10.50

Numero separato con. 5 - Arretrati 12
000

L'eco del Litorale

Mercoledì 29 Lugl'o 1914

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La dichiarazione di guerra alla Serbia

Il proclama dell'Imperatore ai popoli della Monarchia

Il manifesto Imperiale

Il proclama di guerra

traccia, di quelle segrete macchinazioni, le quali furono messe in opera e dirette dalla Serbia.

Questa insopportabile attività deve essere repressa, alle continue provocazioni della Serbia deve essere data una fine, se si vuole che la pace della Monarchia non sia compromessa.

L'esercito austriaco ha varcato la frontiera e marcia vittorioso su Bucovina.

categoria sono organizzate su per all'istesso modo, avendo 3 reggimenti infanteria e cavalleria.

Gorizia, Corso Giuseppe Verdi 34, e succursali in tutte le principali città. — Prezzi per linea di corpo 7: 4.a pagina (divisa in 6 colonne) cent. 20 per linea; 3.a pagina (divisa in 5 colonne) cent. 70 per linea. — Avvisi collettivi cent. 4 per parola.

CONFLAGRAZIONE EUROPEA.

ne rispose la
VIENNA, 2 (sera), C.
z-Bureau.
agenzia Wolff di B
leica:
lorchè giunse qui
In Russia era stati
mobilitazione gene
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tare il Governo r
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ispondere a ques
anda entro il ter
Il Governo russo
evasione a questa
ambasciatore.
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tutta risposta a
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to le ostilità, ma f
ti. Dopo di che
e hanno invaso il
manico e il Gover
dichiarato la guerr



avverbio simultaneamente.
vengono rotte le relazioni
anche le comunicazioni
queste vanno incontro a
A Vienna, prima ancora
azione di guerra, venne
ornali esteri di comunica
mente. I telegrammi sono
a censura. Chi permette
riato dei paesi in guerra

riva a Belgrado dove muore assassi
nato. Ed ora viene un altro: Anche lui
deve abbandonare il paese e suo figlio
cade sul campo di battaglia - poi i
nemici entrano in Serbia. Questa sa
rebbe la profezia. Avverata si è fino
ra l'uccisione del principe Michele,
avverato si è il fatto che re Milano
fu battuto dai bulgari e che dopo do
vette fuggire dai suoi paesi. Sotto il
vapor del...



The Alpenjäger (The Austro-Hungarian Alpine Corps)

Antanti Absburgo!

l'onore e il prestigio della no
Patria siamo giunti all'estremo;
po un periodo, troppo lungo, di
anima tolleranza l'Austria ha fat
proprio dovere, ha posto un ter
all'eterna incertezza, ha posto un
all'azione insensata della ra
megalomania. I perversi di
datori della pace o del be
del nostro popolo, gli se

vole e benevolo verso gli alleati, Austria e Germania.

I giapponesi contro la Russia.

TOKIO, 1 — Il giornale „Nishi Nishi“ scrive: Il Giappone deve sfruttare assolutamente le eventuali difficoltà della Russia per la sistemazione della questione manciuro-mongola.

Ieri ha avuto luogo un lungo consiglio dei ministri.

Il Montenegro inces...

colo Piemonte ba
Ecco perchè la
glia alla guerra.
avrebbe voluto pr
occhi all'eterno so
orrori di una nuo
gioni individuali
stessa corrente che
di gioia doveva pesare immensamente nei consigli della Corona.

E nessuno qui si fa più delle illusioni. Anche se la guerra non sarà localizzata, e sarà invece il preludio di una

che avranno una ripercussione in tutta l'Europa, il diverso atteggiamento dei socialisti può dare adito a gravi preoccupazioni. Noi stiamo attraversando un

per molti e molti ancora.

Nel momento attuale sarà interessante che ci trasportiamo colla mente almeno ad un lembo di quella miste-



called to the service; here they received an indication of their destination in the army.

Pola was instead the headquarters of the Arsenal of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, the main base of collection of personnel and the starting point for missions of warships.

One of the main destinations for the soldiers of the Coast was the front between Austria and Russia in the region of Galicia (officially "Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria"), currently divided between Poland and Ukraine, which had become part of the Habsburg domains in 1772.

On the border with the Russian Empire, this was the most populated region of the Dual Monarchy, with Leopold as capital (now Lviv, in western Ukraine). The local language was mainly Polish and Ukrainian (or Ruthenian).

On the south it bordered another mixed-language region, the small Bukovina, now divided between Romania and Ukraine, with Czernowitz as capital (Chernivtsi in Ukrainian, Cernauti in Romanian, populated mainly by Romanians, Ukrainians and Jews).



The mobilisation started in the second half of July, with the call of younger generations and later the older ones. In San Pietro [San Pier d'Isonzo] the names, with the date and time of departure, were communicated by the municipal messenger Carlo Struchel on the village square, where people were gathered at the sound of the tambourine.

Among them was Giacomo Pian, born in 1884, a blacksmith, married with Oliva Guanin and with a daughter (Giovanna) just over a year old. This is a letter written by him a few months later:

"Dear wife, with this letter I come to let you know that I'm in good health, and so I hope of you and the young girl. It was a good day (the day of departure). They came to pick me up with music, brought me to the station and we left for Lubiana. And slowly I arrived to my destination.

I have written this letter on the train. I always hope to come back home and I cannot write anything else. Give yourself courage, do not give in to depression, I will do the same as much as I can and so lots of greetings and a kiss from me to the little girl".

Original text in Bisiach dialect from G. Franceschin, *San Pier d'Isonzo nella Grande Guerra* (San Pier d'Isonzo during the Great War), San Pier d'Isonzo, 2014.

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE WAR

In **early August** the main European armies were mobilised for war. Fronts were quickly formed: the western one between France and Germany, the eastern one along the borders of Russia, in the north manned by German troops (between East Prussia and Poland), in the south by the Austrians (Galicia and Bukovina). The southern front, between Austria and Serbia, in the end turned out to be only marginal, after the involvement of other European powers. Many other fronts were soon to be added, around the Mediterranean and the rest of the world.

THE WESTERN FRONT

Early August: German troops occupied Luxembourg and entered Belgium, despite the country being neutral. This provoked the entry into the war of Great Britain.

August 14: The French penetrated in Alsace and arrived to the gates of Mulhouse, but were blocked there by the Germans.

August 20: The Germans entered Brussels, while the siege of Antwerp was underway and lasted until September 28.

August 22: German offensive on all fronts, so that on September 2 the government left Paris to retire to Bordeaux. The front moved along the Marne River. The Germans were trying to reach the shores of the English Channel, also as an anti-British move.

Early December: the situation came to a stalemate. The conflict turned from a war of movement to a war of position.

THE RUSSIAN FRONT

Early August: The bulk of Austrian and German troops took position along the border with the Russian Empire. **End of August:** the fighting started in Poland and Galicia, with a series of Austro-German victories, which were interrupted when the Russians forced the Austro-Hungarians to a retreat.

September 3: The Russians conquered Leopold (now



**Western
Front**

Russian front

**Balkan
front**

Lviv, Ukraine); in the same days the Germans instead stopped the Russian advance into East Prussia (first battle of the Masurian Lakes, **September 7-14**); on the south, Austrians were castled in Przemyśl (now Peremyśl, Poland).

THE BALKAN FRONT

In **mid-August** Austrian troops attacked Serbia, with disappointing results.

November 5: After several defeats, the Austrians succeeded in occupying Belgrade. However, the city was retaken by the Serbs on **December 15**. These clashes led the Empire to lose 227,000 men, including 170,000 Serbs (in addition, an epidemic of typhoid fever provoked 150,000 civilian casualties).

WAR OUTSIDE EUROPE

The complex system of colonies brought the conflict simultaneously to many other territories outside Europe: the war became a world affair.

In **Africa** the German colonies bordered with French, English and Portuguese territories: on **August 6** French troops invaded the German colony of **Togo-land**, and on **August 25** British troops from Nigeria invaded the German colony of **Cameroon**.

In the Far East **Japan** went to war against Austria-Hungary and Germany, also for strategic reasons, in order to counter German interests in China. Other German colonies in the Far East and **South Africa** were occupied.

The entry into the war of the **Ottoman Empire** along-



side Austria and Germany opened a new broad front in Asia, with the British who attacked in **Mesopotamia**, and the Russians and Turks fighting in **Persia**. The British also tried to attack the **Dardanelles**, so that in **April 1915** Entente troops occupied the peninsula of **Gallipoli** at the entrance of the strait, with the aim of reaching Istanbul: also here the attack that was expected to be quick turned into an exhausting war of position.

CHRISTMAS TRUCE

December 24, 1914, the first Christmas of the war. Something unexpected happened: in various areas of the Flanders front German and British soldiers met spontaneously to celebrate Christmas together.



SOCIETY AND THE WAR



Following the declaration of war with Serbia and Russia, the civilian population of the Coast initially welcomed the opening of hostilities with jubilation and strong patriotic fervour: it was a widespread belief that Austria would attain a quick and easy victory.

Those called to the army were accompanied to the trains that took them to the front between songs and the cheerful sound of military bands. Soon, however, it was realised that reality was quite different.

The military reverses on the Eastern Front in Galicia handed over to the Russians (2.1196 million prisoners, while on the field over 250,000 Austrian soldiers died, among them also soldiers coming from our provinces).

Although safe from artillery and bombs, the inhabitants of Trieste, Gorizia and Istria were heavily affected by the war: the families lost valid men and the economy fell entirely on the shoulders of the socially weak, particularly women, who had to carry out heavy work in the city and in the countryside.

Solidarity and assistance came in help, and so did the Austrian Red Cross, a peaceful army that throughout eastern Friuli gathered supplies for soldiers at the front.

When the first wounded began to arrive, the most important buildings were used as hospitals, as in the case of the Central Seminary of Gorizia, entrusted to the care of the Sisters of Providence, a religious order founded by the Friulian priest San Luigi Scrosoppi.



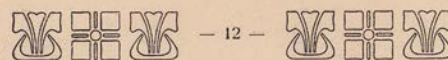
GORIZIA, PIAZZA GRANDE (TRAVNIK)



**From the diary
of Don Giovanni Battista Falzari,
young cooperator in the parish of Grado:**

**"Almost everyone has a relative in our army (...).
From the feats of our brave men on the Scarpazi
[playful mispronunciation for "Carpathians"]
we go to the painful surrender of the fortress
of Presemolo [Przemysł], then the losses of the
allies in the Strait of Sgarzanelli [Dardanelles],
giving a big importance to the news
heard with half an ear by one person or another.
(...) [D]ifficult to report them,
since these are the usual and childish tales
of Grado's people."
(Grado, May 21, 1915)**

In the months following the outbreak of the war, Italy saw the rapid return of the "subjects of the Kingdom" emigrated from the province of Udine, facilitated by Austrian authorities, fearful of a breach of the alliance by Italy: in many cases they returned home without waiting for the remuneration of their seasonal work, thus returning poorer than when they left. Tens of thousands of men that became a problem for the Italian authorities, which faced an emergency that put a strain on the already delicate economic and social situation of the Friulian province. In this context the bitter fight took place that divided public opinion into two opposing camps: those who favoured the war against Austria (interventionists) and those who wanted to keep the country out of the conflict (neu-



La Cros rosse austriache, che a la sò Centrale a Vienne — si ocupe non solamenti dei soldaz feriz e amalaz, ma anche delis famejis dei reclamaz, e di chei che lassàrin la vite sul çamp del onor. Durant i luncs agns benedez dela Pas, che an precedud la uerre, la societat dela Cros rosse a ingrumad un biel capital, a emplad magazins intirs di material, a preparad montagnis di blancherie, e iezz, e carozzis e automobi. A possed lazarez di çamp, bastimenz trasformaz in ospedai per il traspuart dei feriz delis batajis di mar — e une quantad di ospedai in ogni provinze del' Austrie.

Nel moment in cui i prins canons tonàrin sui nestrìs confins, eco che lis scuelis, i çhisçhei, i convenz — persin lis universitaz e i teatros, si gambiàrin in çhasis di misericordie — eco che lis nestrìs arciduchessis mudàrin l'abit di sede in une semplice vieste di tele blanche ornade d' une crosute rosse, eco che i trenos di lusso che menàvin i nestrìs viazzators da Triest a Berlin, da Budapest a Parigi, da Praghe a

From T. Lapenna, *Per i nostri soldati* (For our soldiers), Gorizia, 1914.

tralists); the first found support among the "subjects of the Kingdom" expelled from Austria, where they had left all their possessions; the latter collected the sympathy of the majority of the population, rooted in the Catholic culture and far from irredentist aspirations. However, what prevailed was a conduct loyal to the choices that the Italian government took on later.



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