

POLITICS OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE IN THE EAST ADRIATIC COAST (1809–1814)

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ABSTRACT. The article processes the period of the French Empire's rule on the east Adriatic coast between 1809 and 1814. Based on the relevant literature and historical sources, the article points to events that followed Campo Formio's peace in 1797 until the destruction of French rule in 1814. Special focus is placed on the activities of the new rulers, based on the ideas of the French revolutions, which sought to transform the area of east Adriatic and integrate it into the state system of the French empire, with the goal of creating a united political, administrative, militaristic, economic and cultural-educational area. In that context, in the article, the main question being examined is the formation of the Illyrian provinces, which were intended to be a separate province of the French empire, which was supposed to unite different national and religious communities that spoke the same language. With a comprehensive analysis of political and social changes, an attempt is made to point to a pioneer attempt to transform a patriarchal and traditional community, through the implementation of modern models of public administration, healthcare, and education.

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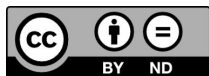
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INTRODUCTION

French Revolution (1789) and its ideological and political heritage was to play a key role in the shaping of the new socio-political reality of Europe during the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. Heritage of the revolution and the proclaimed ideas of natural and inalienable liberties, legal equality, and national sovereignty was going to become the basis for shaping the modern identity of Europe, the new concept of social development, and interstate relations. After defending the revolutionary her-



itage and establishing France as the most influential European state, a new European identity based on the ideas of the revolution would begin to form, based on the concept of a community of sovereign European nations, led by France. Inspired by the creation of the United States, Napoleon wanted to create a great European community of nation-states, which was intended to replace the old (Westphalian) concept of the balance of power and promote France as the key player in new Europe. The new concept of the Community of European Nations gained its ideological basis from the values of the French Revolution: secularism, enlightenment, promoting the idea of the right of any community or nation for sovereignty and self-determination. Of course, the right to self-determination was not absolute, because the concept of a new Europe foresaw the creation of a system that would be under the absolute patronage of the French empire. On those traditions, a new role for the nation was defined, envisioned as the “basic unit of harmonized cooperation”, through the concept of natural borders and the right to self-determination. Napoleon recognized this right to nations and not to monarchs that were controlling various nations. Thus, Napoleon placed himself as the protector of peoples and nations, breaking the sovereignty of monarchs which threatened a nation’s right to self-determination. Using that approach, Napoleon tried creating a type of European Commonwealth – an association of independent peoples and nations, under the control of the French empire. This approach to organizing the state was diametrically opposed to what was the existing heritage of Europe. That is why that conflict had the characteristics of an ideological clash between the new political forces which advocated for the destruction of the feudal order and for implementing a civic society, with the powers of the Ancien Régime, which tried to maintain the status quo. The only sustainable way of maintaining French hegemony in Europe was military conquest, and that plan had begun to be realized after the French victory over the Second Coalition and the peace of Amiens (1802) when French hegemony over Europe begins. The concept of French hegemony was based on the ideas of the French revolutions and Enlightenment which affirmed the beliefs of “unity of humanity”, or rather superiority of political ideas: liberty, equality, and brotherhood; that is, the fundamental values of civic rights that came about from the heritage of the French revolution. Napoleon believed that after his conquests and implementation of these universal principles, all European nations would see the advantages of political ideas and social concepts proclaimed by the French empire. The French ruler was deeply convinced of the power of Enlightenment ideas and all-encompassing reforms to societal relations, which were according to him the basis of modernization. The fundamental document of these reforms was Napoleon’s civic law of 1804, which was the basis for every further concept of the modern state: centralized bureaucratic apparatus, unified judiciary, tax and customs system, as well as education and the removal of all privileges to the feudal class, legal equality and separation of church and state. As a consequence of these reforms, strengthening of social and political power of the bourgeoisie came about, through the concept of guaranteed legal and property security, and removal of internal taxation.¹

¹ T. Yepremyan, *Napoleonic paradigm of European integration: theory and history*, “Napoleonica. La Revue” 2021, vol. 39, no. 1, p. 36.

FRENCH RULE IN THE EAST ADRIATIC COAST

With the peace treaty of Campo Formio, which ended the war between the First French Republic and the Habsburg monarchy in October of 1797, France showed that in the coming years, the Adriatic will be one of the more important geopolitical directions of spreading of its influence in Europe. Treaty of Campo Formio gave France the control of Lombardy and Genoa (Cisalpine and Ligurian republics), while the Austrians, as a form of compensation, got the entire east Adriatic coast (Venice, Istria, Dalmatia, and Boka) which used to belong to Venice, the 1100 year existence of which was ended by that treaty.

Three months after the peace of Campo Formio, French troops began their retreat from Venice and parts of the east Adriatic given to the Austrian authorities. From January until March of 1799. Austrian troops took control of the entire Adriatic from Venice to Budva² in the south.³ It turned out that the giving of the Adriatic to Austria was just a transitional solution for the French, whose final ambition was to create total domination in the Adriatic, as a part of their wider plan – control of the Mediterranean. As early as August 1798 conflict between France and the Second Coalition (Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Spain, Naples, and the Ottoman Empire) continued. In this period, after a coup, Napoleon Bonaparte is appointed the head of France and eventually becomes the First Consul of the French Republic. After the change at France's helm, a series of military victories resulted in the Treaty of Amiens in March 1802 which brought the collapse of the Second Coalition. In a similar manner, the Third Coalition (Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Naples, Sweden) would end after the battle of Ulm and Austerlitz in November 1805.⁴ The Treaty of Pressburg in December 1805 forced Austria to give the French empire all the territory which used to belong to Venice in the east Adriatic, given to them in the treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. The surrender of territory was supposed to be finalized by January 1806, but the French-Austrian agreement met opposition from Russia, which sent a fleet that conquered the Ionian island and Corfu. Russians, in a deal they made with Austria took control over Boka Bay, which gave them complete dominance over the entrance to the Adriatic Sea and as such disrupted French plans of hegemony over the Mediterranean. The attempted establishment of Russia in the east Adriatic continued with the support of Montenegro, which aligned itself with Russia and commenced attacks against the French troops, in an attempt to conquer the Republic of Ragusa.⁵ The French fortified their positions around Dubrovnik, but the establishment of control over Boka, as per the agreement made in the treaty of Pressburg, would not be possible until August of 1807 when the Russians retreated from the east Adriatic.

² Present day Montenegro.

³ G. Cozzi, M. Knapp, G. Scarabello, *Povijest Venecije*, vol. 2, Zagreb 2007, p. 719.

⁴ R. Raspopović, *Istočna obala Jadrana od mira u Kampoformiju do Bečkog kongresa*, „Istorijski zapisi” 2016, vol. 1–2, p. 121.

⁵ B. Pavičević, *Crna Gora i Boka Kotorska od Požunskog do Tilzitskog mira 1805–1807*, „Istorijski zapisi” 1985, vol. 3–4, p. 5.

After establishing dominance over the whole of the east coast of the Adriatic (the area from Trieste to Budva), the French joined these territories to the previously formed Italian kingdom. The area of Dalmatia, Dubrovnik, and Boka had a type of autonomy within the Italian kingdom, under the control of a military commander – General Auguste de Marmon and civil administrator – Governor Vincenzo Dandolo. The East Adriatic coast was a part of the Italian kingdom until 1809, the year of the victory over the Fifth Coalition. After Napoleon's defeated Austria at the Battle of Wagram, near Vienna, on June 6, 1809 the triumph over the Fifth Coalition was made official. Austria was forced to sign a difficult treaty in the Schönbrunn palace, near Vienna, on October 14, 1809. That treaty confirmed the Austrian loss of the east Adriatic coast: Vienna had to cede to the French the whole of Istria, Slovenia, as well as Croatia south of the Sava river and the so-called Military Frontier, with which Austria lost around 83000 km² and 3,5 million people.⁶

In the area which France took from Austria, in accordance with the peace of Schönbrunn, a new autonomous province of the French empire was created: Illyrian provinces. The decree of founding and temporary organization of this province of the French empire was proclaimed by Napoleon Bonaparte on December 25, 1809. Illyrian provinces had an area of over 55000 km², with about 1,5 million people. The communities united within the Illyrian provinces had a completely different historical and social heritage, formed from different cultures, languages, faiths, and nations, which were shaped by their completely different political and social circumstances.⁷ Within the Illyrian provinces there were: Corinthia, Cariniola, which were under Hapsburg rule since the 14th century, Croatia south of the river Sava, Trieste which was under the Hapsburgs since 1382, Istria and Dalmatia, Dubrovnik, which was an independent city until the French took it in 1808, as well as Boka Kotorska, which only became part of France a few years earlier.⁸ New administrative area of the French empire got its name after the former province of the Roman empire – Illyricum, and according to some interpretations, that name was chosen by the first governor of the province: Auguste Marmont, who was, allegedly, under the influence of civic and revolutionary circles in Dalmatia and wanted to show support to gathering of different national and religious communities that lived on the territory of the Provinces.⁹

The administrative organization of new provinces of the French empire went quite slowly because Austria constantly refused to fully enforce all the points of the peace of Schönbrunn. For that reason, Napoleon himself didn't rush with the final defining of the status of these provinces. The fact that five new areas, which became part of the new administrative province of the French empire, with different heritage, so-

⁶ S. Ćosić, *Dubrovnik u Ilirskim pokrajinama*, "Anali zavoda za povijesne znanosti Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Dubrovniku" 1997, vol. 35, p. 38.

⁷ R.A. Stauber, *The Illyrian Provinces. The Napoleonic empire and the new European political culture*, London 2012, p. 242.

⁸ A. Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe*, London 2003, p. 188.

⁹ S. Ćosić, op. cit., p. 38.

cial, economic, and political bounds and had unresolved questions of feudal relations and ownership of land in certain territories of the Illyrian provinces, constituted a problem of its own kind. Those circumstances required a complete and united response, which August Marmont, the first governor of the province, proposed in Paris in 1811. On his insistence, on April 15, 1811, the Decree on the organization of Illyrian provinces (*Décret sur l'organisation de l'Illyrie*) was adopted, as a type of compilation of existing institutions, traditions, and contemporary norms of the French civic legislation.¹⁰ Basic novelties legalized by the Decree, were the introduction of general equality in the courts, equalized tax requirements, and abolishment of fiscal privileges, which brought about strong social development and modernization of communities that lived on this area of the Illyrian provinces.¹¹

French authorities tried to adapt the new province to the administrative heritage of the French empire. From 1809 to 1811, territory of the Illyrian provinces was divided into 11 intendatures/areas with capitals: Postojna (Postojna); Boka-Kotorska (Kotor); Croatia (Karlovac); Dalmatia (Zadar); Rijeka (Rijeka); Gorica (Gorica); Ljubljana (Ljubljana); Novo Mesto (Novo Mesto); Dubrovnik (Dubrovnik); Trst (Trieste); Filah (Filah). The areas were divided into smaller districts; kotars and municipalities. Municipalities were the smallest administrative units and were intended as executive organs of the central government. Every municipality of 2500 people had a mayor and a city council comprising 5 people.¹² In the administrative reform of the French empire of 1815, Illyrian provinces were divided into 7 areas which were supposed to resemble French departments in their administrative structure: Carinthia with its capital Villach, which included the districts of Villach and Lienz; Carniola with its capital Ljubljana and districts Postojna, Krain and Novo Mesto; Civil Croatia with its capital Karlovac and districts of Rijeka and Mali Lošinj; Military Croatia (Croatie Militaire) with its capital Senj and regiments of Lika, Otok, Ogulin, Slunj, Glina and Petrinja; Istria with its capital Trieste and districts Trieste, Goica, Koper and Rovinj; Dalmatia with capital Zadar and districts Split, Hvar Šibenik, Makarska; and the department of Dubrovnik, with its capital of the same name and districts of Dubrovnik, Kotor and Korčula.¹³ Areas that became part of the Illyrian provinces did not have a common historical experience, nor did they have sustainable connections. The largest part of the territory of Provinces was mountainous areas, and as much as a third of the territory was unworkable land. Out of the 1,5 million people, most were Catholics, but about 20% were Orthodox minority.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 39.

¹¹ P. Vodopivec, *Illyrian Provinces from a Slovene perspective: myth and reality* [in:] *Napoleon's Empire. War, culture and society, 1750–1850*, eds. R. Blaufarb, A. Forrest, K. Hagemann, A. Mikaberidze, London 2024, p. 253.

¹² D. Samardžić, *Provincijska, distriktiska i opštinska uprava u našim zemljama za vrijeme francuske vladavine*, "Godišnjak Pravnog fakulteta u Sarajevu" 1967, vol. 15, p. 484.

¹³ *Décret sur l'organisation l'illyrie*, De L'imprimerie du gouvernement, Laybach 1811, p. 12, 13.

¹⁴ A. Grab, op. cit., p. 189.

The formation of the Illyrian provinces was in the service of geopolitical interest of the French empire, or rather the ambitions of establishing economic and military control of the Mediterranean.¹⁵ Napoleon wanted to completely separate Austria from the Adriatic and eliminate every attempt of the Hapsburgs to influence the political process in Italian states. On the other hand, Napoleon's economic goal was the complete closure of the Adriatic coast to British trade, as well as creating trade connections with the Levant, which would secure him undisturbed importation of cotton from the east Mediterranean for the French textile industry.¹⁶ For Napoleon Bonaparte, forming Illyrian Provinces was not just a way to administratively control territories taken from Austria and Venice. This area, for the French empire, had a much more important geopolitical goal. The formation of the Illyrian provinces allowed France to form a sort of buffer area towards Russia, and the continuation of the "Military Frontier" on the Ottoman border was inherited from an earlier period, but still was vital in isolating Austria from the Adriatic Sea. Also, this new province of the empire served a role in the commercial isolation of England from the Adriatic Sea and establishing a type of naval embargo on all trade routes which came from the Levant toward Europe.¹⁷ In an attempt to completely isolate England and minimize its commercial influence, the French Empire's plan was to move all trade with the Ottoman Empire and the Levant away from the sea and onto overland routes.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE EAST ADRIATIC COAST DURING THE RULE OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE

Establishing total control of east Adriatic coast in 1809, the process of total transformation of this area, and its inclusion into social and political framework of the French state had begun. For the largest part of the east Adriatic this process marks the end of civilizational backwardness and gradual inclusion into contemporary European enlightenment ideas based on the ideas of the French republic. Besides the geopolitical context, in which France took over full control of the coasts of the Adriatic Sea, the formation of the Illyrian provinces brought about large changes in the administrative, legal, and social organization of the area under French control. Although the French administration in the largest part of the Adriatic only lasted seven years, in that period powerful and efficient administration was set up which established: educational, health, social, and cultural foundations for the future development of that area.

Disregarding the fact that the shores of the Adriatic Sea, unlike the interior, were under the continual and strong influence of Western civilization, at the beginning of the 19th century this area was still a civilizational and cultural periphery. The testa-

¹⁵ M. Broers, *Europe under Napoleon, 1799–1815*, London 1996, p. 220.

¹⁶ A. Grab, op. cit., p. 189.

¹⁷ P. Vodopivec, op. cit., p. 252.

ment to this is the first comprehensive report of French authorities which in December 1806 was sent to Napoleon by the first governor of the area – Vincenzo Dandolo. In the report, Dandolo describes “miserable life circumstances and economic backwardness”, as he explains:

May Your Majesty know that in Dalmatia outside the towns the inhabitants don't have houses (for one can't call a room on bare soil, open on multiple sides, in which people and animals live together, a house), animals don't have mews, farmers are without land, hills are without plants and forests are without trees, that wide area is without usable roads, there is neither force nor a soldier for enforcing laws. Finally, village folk are without education, without crafts, without doctors and surgeons, and far away from civilization. Only ignorance of those people is to blame for frequent disparate shortages and famines, which destroy by death or emigration the base strength of Dalmatia. The only wealth they have is their strong muscles.¹⁸

It would turn out very quickly that France had very clear plans which counted on connecting the east Adriatic with the state and economic framework of the French empire, which was just one in a series of steps to the final goal of Napoleon Bonaparte – establishing French hegemony in Europe. In that context, the strategic task of the French administration was the transport connection of these areas with the rest of the French empire. Establishing a modern communication and transportation network, which would secure an undisturbed movement of French soldiers, played a key role in the process of establishing control over Illyrian provinces. During negotiations that preceded the signing of the peace treaty with Austria in Schönbrunn, Napoleon asked his diplomats to insist on this question stating that “communication of Dalmatia with the Kingdom of Italy is of the greatest interest of France”. New transport networks which were built on the Adriatic coast and its hinterland, were a part of a wider plan of commercial isolation of England and changing the focus on establishing stronger trade connections with the Ottoman empire and trade centers of the Levant, through existing communications which went as far as to Sarajevo and Travnik. With the aid of the army, recruiting the local population, and the oversight of transportation engineers from France, the construction of the so-called Napoleon's road started. The official name of the road was *Route Impériale No. 5 de Laybach en Albanie*, and its construction lasted from 1807 to 1810, and along with the existing communication network it was the key infrastructure basis of French power in the Illyrian provinces.¹⁹ The road was supposed to connect Illyrian Provinces and its route started in Ljubljana, went through Postojna and Rijeka, over Senj, Otočac up to Knin and then through Sinj and Dubrovnik towards Kotor, Budva and Albania.²⁰

Transportation connection and tying Illyrian provinces to the French empire was just the first step in the process of establishing control over the area. French plans

¹⁸ M.D. Grmek, *Opći pogled na zdravstvene prilike u Dalmaciji za vrijeme Francuske vladavine, napose u prvoj godini nove uprave*, “Starine” 1960, vol. 50, p. 422.

¹⁹ R.A. Stauber, op. cit., p. 242.

²⁰ D. Martinović, K. Ražov, *La route Napoléon en Dalmatie*, Zagreb 2019, p. 10, 13–14.

were more ambitious and assumed a total modernization of society through the concept of "Social contract" which Napoleon took from the philosophical teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. At the beginning of the 19th century, the idea of the modernization of states on the principles and ideas of the French Revolution meant several clearly determined activities. Firstly, the creation of powerful centralized bureaucratic apparatus which was able to efficiently enact plans of the executive government. The formation of a unified judicial, taxation, and customs system, centralized, mandatory, and free education, the abolishment of all privileges and status of nobility, as well as separation of church and state.²¹ The fundamental document for the realization of these ideas and implementation of all-encompassing reforms was the Civil Code (*Le Code civil des Français*), also known as the Napoleon Code, adopted in 1804. A new political framework under the control of the French marked the beginning of the implementation of the French civil code, better known as the Napoleon Code. This code was a part of a wider plan of creating a European community, as advocated by Napoleon, which would secure the public, political, and administrative union of Europe, but also ensure the transition of old (feudal) regimes and their adjustment to the new circumstances. The Civil Code was supposed to secure the unity of European judicial and administrative systems, and its basic function was the harmonization and integration of European judiciary and a form of transition from a medieval, to a modern state.²² On the east Adriatic coast the Code was in force from 1808, when Dalmatia and the republic of Ragusa became a part of the French empire, and between 1809 and 1914 the Civil code was in force on the remaining parts of the east Adriatic coast. The new law system, as conceived on the ideas of the French revolution brought in radical changes on the area of the east Adriatic coast. With the French civil code, for the first time the equality for all citizens, regardless of their religious, national or social background, was guaranteed. The Code ensured the inalienability of private property, religious equality were guaranteed, but also the concept of secularism which envisioned the complete separation of church and state.²³

The establishment of administrative and judicial unity of Illyrian provinces was just the first phase of tying the region to the political framework of France. Clear geopolitical goals of the French empire on the east Adriatic were impossible without a stable and centralized government. French authorities in the Illyrian provinces have insisted on establishing complete dominance over the most important political and social processes, and the implementation of the French judiciary and practice of post-revolutionary France, since day one, and it became one of the primary tasks of the new administration.

Education was one of the key mechanisms of establishing utter social and political hegemony in the annexed lands of the French empire. First field reports after

²¹ T. Yepremyan, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 50.

²³ T. Yepremyan, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

the French takeover in these lands, signalled the very low level of education among the population. These reports emphasized that the largest barrier to the economic and cultural advancement of these areas was “primitive mentality and way of life”, and the people in these areas were: “rugged and gifted people, but unenlightened, illiterate, distrustful of novelty, even they were to their benefit”.²⁴ Inspired by the idea of Enlightenment and the Encyclopaedist movement, the primary function of schools was, for the French administration, to „give everyone the knowledge which they need to fulfil those roles which the society needs of them.”²⁵ One of the most important steps in that direction was the establishment of a unified network of elementary and middle school education under state control. In October 1810 the General plan of public education in the provinces (*Plan général de l’Instruction publique dans les provinces*) was adopted, which was supposed to be the basis for establishing unified language education in the entire province. This plan made schooling free within the state administration, with a clear division of public schools, Gymnasiums and Lyceums. Education in public schools was in the vernacular language, Gymnasiums had mixed vernacular and French language, while Lyceums in Ljubljana and Zadar had classes in French and Italian languages.²⁶ For the realization of these ambitious plans, necessary workforce was required, educated in the ideas of Enlightenment and the French revolution. In some areas such as Boka Kotorska, these teachers and professors were the bearers of developing cultural life and played an important role in the shaping of material and immaterial culture of the wider area.²⁷

Aside from education, the administration of the French empire in the east Adriatic had laid the foundations of the modern healthcare system. Before the French arrived, health and sanitary conditions in the east Adriatic were poor. That situation is attested to by a report from 1806 from Split in which it is reported that the streets of Split were full of dirt and that because of the unclean water collection cisterns, water quality was quite bad, and that the standard of food was inadequate, and that there are a lot of acute and venereal diseases. In that report, the number of deaths was $\frac{2}{3}$ higher than the number of births, and the largest numbers of those who help with illnesses were quacks and charlatans.²⁸ This, not the least bit of adequate healthcare and epidemiological protection had put the new administration in a difficult situation. During the time of the French empire, foundations of all-encompassing health protection of populations were put in place. A system of epidemiological protections, communal hygiene, vaccinations, medical practice, as well as the concept of public health

²⁴ M.D. Grmek, op. cit., p. 421.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 418.

²⁶ T.S. Brnardić, *Prijevodi Napoleonova katekizma (1806.) u Dalmaciji i Ilirskim pokrajinama*, “Crkva u svijetu” 2021, vol. 56, no. 2, p. 181.

²⁷ A. Prekić, *Kulturno nasljeđe Crne Gore: od najstarijih vremena do 20. vijeka*, Podgorica 2020, p. 184.

²⁸ M.D. Grmek, op. cit., p. 420.

institutions, i.e. hospitals, was put in place.²⁹ French government formed the so-called Central healthcare commission, as well as a separate institution, namely Public charity society, which took care of the establishment and maintenance of hospitals and other public institutions.³⁰

The practice of mandatory vaccination against smallpox was implemented and a wide campaign of vaccine benefits education was started. Due to the large number of illiterates, as well as general distrust of “city novelty” by the population, the French administration included individuals from public life, as well as church dignitaries, who explained the importance of vaccination.³¹ Special attention was paid to the prevention of contagious diseases, so a series of regulations had a certain level of control of all goods and individuals traveling through trade roads from the Ottoman Empire. All caravans that came from the east were subject to special scrutiny by the health officials, and in the case of signs of a contagious disease, decisions were made very quickly about forbidding the entrance of those travelers to the Illyrian provinces. Similar procedures were implemented for all goods and individuals who came via the sea route.³² For the first time in the history of these regions, regulations on management of communal affairs, mandatory cleaning and arrangement of public space were introduced. With the rulebooks about “public cleanliness”, the French administration tried to manage the maintenance of public spaces, as well as the communal affairs of every community. Rulebooks had a clear function; they were supposed to secure the conditions for the “health and cleanliness of cities”. Rulebooks forbade throwing away trash, leftovers, and feces within cities and in their proximity, as well as throwing trash into the sea. Citizens were obligated to sweep the streets in front of their homes daily, and during summer months, clean the public space with water. The question of the use of city water supply was settled, as well as the manner and conditions in which goods were sold in public markets. Within city/urban areas, a ban on the sale of livestock, butchering, and preparing meat was introduced, and special places were designated for that task.³³

Policies of the French empire on the east Adriatic coast destroyed the monopoly of the church and limited its influence in the society. Based on the traditions of the French Revolution and ideas of Enlightenment, the new administration significantly limited the impact of clergy, which is why common folk often gave them the epithet “faithless”. Policies of the French empire on the east Adriatic coast assumed the nationalization of the largest parts of church property and turning clergymen into state

²⁹ D. Šagolj, *Javnozdravstvene mjere u Zadru 1810. godine* [in:] *Ilirske pokrajine 1809–1813 u svjetlu povjesnih vrela*, Zagreb 2020, p. 60.

³⁰ M.D. Grmek, op. cit., p. 403.

³¹ D. Slišković, *Vakcinacija u vrijeme ilirskih pokrajina* [in:] *Ilirske pokrajine 1809–1813 u svjetlu povjesnih vrela*, Zagreb 2020, p. 79.

³² M.D. Grmek, op. cit., p. 410, 411.

³³ Državni arhiv u Zadru – fond 386 (*Pravilnik o javnoj čistoći*, Zadar, 23.04.1810); see also *Ilirske pokrajine 1809–1813 u svjetlu povjesnih vrela*, Zagreb, 2020, p. 64.

officials, and limited the public works of the church, through the abolishment of various charity funds, clerical orders, as well as complete secularization of education and its exclusion from church affairs.³⁴

The French administration in the province was convinced that large divisions among the peoples of the Illyrian provinces could be overcome with the implementation of: legal, administrative, religious and linguistic unity. Out of all those ideas, the introduction of a unified, common – Illyrian – language was the most interesting, and it is what the first governor of the Illyrian provinces – August Marmont – insisted on. It was a complex idea because, on the territory of the province, there were different linguistic heritages from Caranthian Slovenia, Croatia, Dalmatia and various forms of shtokavian and iekavian pronunciations. Marmont tried to find a compromise by forcing the so-called “Dubrovnik (i)jekavian”, a local dialect of the republic of Dubrovnik, which according to Marmont could be the most acceptable as a model for the common-Illyrian tongue. This idea was staunchly opposed by intellectuals from Slovenia who did not want to accept the idea that the Slovenian language should be subordinate to the proposed pronunciation, which is why the idea of introducing a unified language in the Illyrian provinces was abandoned.³⁵ Although the administration of the French empire did not have an intention of affirmation of any national movements in the territory of the Illyrian provinces, wide-reaching reforms started by the French administration influenced the shaping of certain national sentiments of that area’s populous. This primarily refers to the affirmation of Slavic-Illyrian identity which unified a common language spoken by the population of said territory. Key generators of that process were the different activities in the fields of education and culture, which brought about the homogenization of the population. The affirmation of certain forms of national identity during the time of French administration was not used for the promotion of some special national identity of any of the Yugoslav peoples, instead, that process had the form of shaping a type of common supra-national – Illyrian – identity. This was to some extent the consequence of the French perception of these communities, which generally viewed Slavs as a unified national group, whose internal differentiation was secondary, conditioned by natural and social circumstances in which they inhabited.³⁶

The ambitious plans of the French empire on the east Adriatic coast were stopped after the French defeat in the invasion of Russia. In the same way, situations on the European fronts determined the position of the east Adriatic coast the first time around, the French defeat in the War of the Sixth Coalition (Russia, England, Austria, Prussia, Sweden) determined the fate of the east Adriatic. After the defeat of Napoleon’s army

³⁴ J. Jerković, K. Puljizević, *Odnos francuske vlasti prema Crkvi u Dalmaciji na primjeru dvaju dokumenata iz vremena Ilirskih pokrajina* [in:] ibidem, p. 104.

³⁵ T.S. Brnardić, op. cit., p. 183.

³⁶ W. Sajkowski, *French image of the inhabitants of the Illyrian Provinces and the emergence of South Slavic nationalisms*, “Balcanica Posnaniensia. Acta et Studia” 2020, vol. 27, p. 78.

in Russia and a large counteroffensive, the allies entered Paris on March 30, 1814. Austria restored its administration over the east Adriatic coast in 1813, and on all the territories which it gave to the French empire between 1797 and 1809.³⁷

CONCLUSION

French empire, established in 1804, was conceived as a great supranational community based on the ideas of the French bourgeois revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte envisioned that system as the idea of a united Europe formed by nations integrated under the wing of French hegemony, which had a unified legal, customs, tax, military, educational, and economic system. From the treaty of Campo Formio in 1797 until the fall of the French empire in 1814, within the French state, or rather the French empire, the territory of east Adriatic was included, which after the fall of the Venetian republic became an important sphere of interest of the Hapsburg monarchy. Alongside the Italian state, the east Adriatic was a key point of conflict between Austria and France, the interests of which overlapped in this region. The dominance over east Adriatic coast was for France a part of wider geopolitical project of the control of the Mediterranean and the tearing of trade routes between England and the Levant. France wanted to limit the English influence of the Mediterranean in every way, trying to redirect the complete commercial exchange between Europe with the Levant and the Ottoman Empire through its own trade companies, relying on the new communication network which was being built towards the Ottoman empire.

Apart from the geopolitical goals, the French government on the east Adriatic had the function of establishing a new social order based on the values of the French Revolution and Enlightenment ideas. More specifically, it implied the incorporation of the East Adriatic in the political, administrative, economic, and cultural context of the French empire. In a little more than ten years, the French administration of the East Adriatic completely altered the way public administration was organized through the implementation of modern modes of organization of state apparatus. In that period, the centralization of public administration, establishment of a wide system of public, free and mandatory education, and introduction of the first models of health and social protection were all introduced. French government during that period abolished monopolies of religious institutions, affirmed linguistic connections of the inhabitants of the east Adriatic, and opened the doors for the constitution of a new identity based on modern and secular values. It is intriguing that the French government of the east Adriatic, through the concept of Illyrian provinces created the first kind of state union in which different national and religious communities all lived in harmony, under French control. In that way, through the concept of wide-reaching social reforms, the

³⁷ S. Ćosić, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

French administration in the east Adriatic coast had in a short time shaped the social, educational, and cultural foundations of the future development of these territories.

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