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*Visit of Count Ciano to Yugoslavia in January 1939 and Downfall  
of Milan Stojadinović*

*Summary*

The visit of Count Ciano to Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1939 was of a great importance for Italian-Yugoslav relations in the period between the wars. Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs had frank relations with his Yugoslav colleague Milan Stojadinović and found in him reliable collaborator for creation of expansionistic Fascistic goals. The first part of diplomatic activities was held during the hunting at the state property Belje. The most important topic of the conversation was Albania and possibility to be split between Yugoslavia and Italy. This proposal more attracted Stojadinović than Prince Pavle. However no new agreement was signed during this visit. Nevertheless Ciano left Yugoslavia convinced that everything went on according to the Italian plans.

The relations between two countries changed all of a sudden, only two weeks after Ciano's visit, Italian favorite Stojadinović was ousted from power. This act caused Mussolini to change his policy regarding cooperation with Yugoslavia and decided to occupy Albania by himself. Without Stojadinović, Italian foreign policy turned to helping Croat separatists in their work on breaking down Yugoslavia that led towards open conflict in spring 1941. Visit in question did not have anything to do with fall of Yugoslav Prime Minister. Prince Pavle made this decision earlier because of too much freedom that Stojadinović had in foreign policy and unpreparedness to negotiate with Croatian leadership. Actually, Prince Pavle waited two weeks to make this step in order not to leave the impression that change of the government had anything to do with the visit of Italian Foreign Minister.