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The British rule and the English constitution in Corsica, 1794-1796

In the spring of 1794, the island of Corsica united with Great Britain. It looks like the beginning of an absurd novel, but it's the real history. In December of 1793, the young General Bonaparte defeated the coalition army in Toulon, the British fleet refuged from the port, on the board with hundreds of royalists, and the remains of the British army. They needed a port, urgently. At the same time, the island of Corsica revolted against the French jacobinians. So, Corsica needed a helpful great power. The head of the Corsican people, Pasquale Paoli offered the ports to England and asked political and military support. After a fast agreement, in May of 1794, the Corsican *consulta* (the legislative assembly) voted the union and the new constitution of the new Anglo-Corsican Kingdom. This extraordinary document is worth to your attention.

At the end of the 18th century, the constitution was the most important question for the European world. This theme involved the social contract, the people's sovereignty, the general taxation, and some themes of the human rights, like the Habeas Corpus, and the right of the property. Most of the European elite suffered by the anglomania, and this anglomania have caused mainly by the English constitutional ideas. They were convinced: the best political system is the English one. The greatest success of the English constitution was that it served as a model for the main enemies: the French and the American constitution involve lots of elements of the English one.¹

When the British commissioner, Sir Gilbert Elliot, and Pasquale Paoli in the spring of 1794 started to form the new Corsican constitution, it was an extraordinary work. The two countries and peoples differed almost totally, uniting them in one state – it would be almost impossible (just as the European Union in the 21th century). There was only one person, who dared it: Pasquale Paoli, who was an excellent specialist of the ancient Corsican constitution, he made one in 1755², later he lived in England almost 20 years, when he knew well the English constitution also. It was a special grace for him to take part in the elaboration of the latest Corsican constitution. The constitutional committee composed of 36 members,

¹ *The Nineteenth-century constitution: 1815-1914: documents and commentary* / ed. H. J. HANHAM. Cambridge, University Press, 1969. 1. (see later: Nineteenth)

² CARRINGTON, Dorothy: *Pascal Paoli et sa „constitution”: 1755-1769*, Annales Historiques de la Révolution Françaises, 1974. 508-541.

Corsican and English ones, like Sir Gilbert Elliot³ or Pozzo di Borgo⁴. For the English member of the committee, Sir Gilbert it was a unique challenge: this was the first experience to „export“ the English constitution.

The English government faced a special situation, it had no precedents: there was no country, or people, who would be a volunteer to be a part of the British Empire. And to top it all, this island was totally unknown for the English public.⁵ The English politicians were suspicious: the Corsicans were must be primitive and catholic – but not an African or Indian „savage“. The Corsicans were also suspicious: the Englishmen were mainly protestant.⁶

At the mid-1790s England just started to resolve the deep political, moral, and economical crisis, caused by the American war. In the same time England received very contentedly the news on the French economical and political crisis – which proved to be much deeper, than England's crisis a few years later. The English politicians remembered to the American events, almost 10 years before, they would not risk the shame of a new revolt. The Pitt government already worked a project to make comfortable the Empire for the Canadian, Indian, or even Irish population. The first reforms were made in the 1790s. At the beginning of the French war (the English called it „*Anti-Jacobin*“) the English political public was quiet and self-confident.

The main cause of this self-confidence was their faith in the excellence of England's system of government and constitution. This „*mixed government*“ contains a fragile balance of the monarchic, aristocratic and democratic type of governments, the balance of the powers of the King, the House of Lords and the House of Commons.⁷ The fragile balance concerned to the legislative,

³ Sir Gilbert Elliot, 1st Earl of Minto (1751-1814) A prominent whig politician. Follower of Lord Rockingham, later Charles Fox, but in 1793, when the French war broke out, he abandoned the whig party, to William Pitt's „*new-tory*“ party. He got some government offices: in the autumn of 1793, he became the Civil Commissioner of Toulon, later the same in Corsica. From the October 1794 to the autumn of 1796 Viceroy of Corsica. Later ambassador at Vienna. The top of his career is the Viceroyalty of India. See: JUDD, Gerrit P.: *Members of Parliament 1734-1832*. Hamden, Archon Books, 1972. 185. *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 1st Earl of Minto from 1751 to 1806* in 3 Volumes. Longmans, London, 1874. passim

⁴ Carlo Andrea Pozzo di Borgo (1764-1842) Corsian esquire, lawyer. As young a friend of Bonaparte Napoleon, later his enemy. He became the right-hand of Elliot in the time of the Anglo-Corsican Kingdom, In the autumn of 1796 emigrated. He got English pension, later secretary and diplomat of tsar Alexander I. After the restauration also diplomat for Louis XVIII. See: John Michael P. MCERLEAN: *The Formative Years of a Russian Diplomat* (PhD thesis) University of Washington, 1967. passim, ill.: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carlo_Andrea,_count_Pozzo_di_Borgo (8. July 2005.)

⁵ Memorials and correspondence of Charles James Fox. Vol. 3. London, Richard Bentley, 1854. 72-79.

⁶ A Prime Minister and his Son: From the Correspondence of the 3rd Earl of Bute and of Lt.-General the Hon. Sir Charles Stuart / ed. E. STUART Worthley. Dutton, New York, 1925. (STUART), 251.

⁷ This detailed by: Lord Henry BROUGHAM: *The British Constitution, its History, Structure, and Working*. Griffin, London, 1860. 1-28.

executive and juridical power also. These were oversensitive questions in these days: the main questions of the British political life were the influence of the Crown (the executive power), the connection between the King and the Parliament, or even the King's personal power. From the 1780s the Parliament voted a serial of acts to restraint the power of the King.⁸

The famous British constitution got into a very special situation in the 1790s. The constitutional ideas were not in perfect accordance with the real situation. After the beginning of the French wars, the human rights were gradually withdrawn. First the Alien Act came, in May 1794 they suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, at the end of 1795 the Treasonable and Seditious Practices Act, and the Seditious Meetings and Assemblies Act, and so on.⁹ When the committee formed the Corsican constitution, their model was only an idea.

The constitution of the Anglo-Corsican Kingdom was born on 19. June 1794. This document is contained the latest constitutional ideas.¹⁰ Its form and structure was similar to the Constitutions of the USA, and to the French constitutional monarchy. These documents were made from 1789 to 1791. We have no proofs, whether the Corsican legislators would know the American piece, but they all know the French one for sure. So, this Corsican constitution had an English spirit, but a French form. As a matter of fact, it's worth to mention, that there was a significant difference between the forms of the Corsican and the French constitutions: the Corsican document only a few page, but the French one is a very long and detailed document. It has a special cause. The French constitution detailing accurately all the questions of the political principles, and the state affairs because it would be fundamentally a new system. The Corsican constitution details only the English elements: for example the local government was not mentioned, which is the same as in the old Corsican one.

The few historians, who deals with the Anglo-Corsican state, usually points to the „*quasi-dominium*” situation of Corsica. Corsica's situation in the Anglo-Corsican Union was very similar to the status of Canada after 1867. Canada was the first „*official*” dominium of the British Empire.¹¹ This type of state was formed in those parts of the British Empire, where the population was dominantly English-speaking. They got self-government very similar to the English homeland. There was their own local

⁸ Ld. TANDORI Mária: *Hitek és tévhitek: a „Korona káros befolyása” Angliában a 18. század végén*, IN: KUKOVECZ György (szerk.): *A modern politikai gondolkodás kezdetei*, JATE, Szeged, 1999. 121-128.

⁹ *Il modello*... 193-205.

¹⁰ The text you can find in: Bulletin de la Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de la Corse (BSSHNC) 1891., 121-125. Fasc.

¹¹ Jean-Yves COPPOLANI: *La constitution du 19 juin 1794*, BSSHNC, CXIII-CXIV. Fasc. 668-669. 33-37.

government, legislation, executive and juridical apparatus. They only ought to be sub-missioned to the English sovereign. Besides Canada, the well-known dominions were the Australian states, New Zealand, and for a time South Africa.¹² This situation is not perfectly fit to Corsica: here the population was white and Christian, but not English-origin.¹³ The government of the British Empire was a bit uncertain, what to do the Catholic and Italian-origin people, who wants to join to Great Britain.

The constitutional text was sent to London, for the Royal agreement. It was emphasized: they need not the Parliamentary agreement, because Corsica's ruler only the King of England. If it was a simple personal union, it would be a perfect idea. But there was a more complicated situation. If you consulted with the constitutional text, there are more paragraphs who deal with the royal power. The royal power is only a principle, with lots of restrictions. The real power of King of England was a limited power at the end of the 18th century. It was so-called „delegated” power: so it was made by other persons or bodies. There were great parliamentary debates in the 1790s on the real power of the King or Government, the two Houses of Parliament, and of the state secretaries. So, the state affairs of Corsica connected to 3 or 4 governmental offices. Like an independent country, the affairs of Corsica would be connected to the Foreign office – specifically it was totally far from the theme.¹⁴ The situation of the union with Corsica to be a British Home affair – so the main responsible for Corsica in the British Government was the Home Secretary, Lord Portland. There was some responsibility in the Corsican affairs of the Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, the War Office (there was a British army in the island), the Admiralty (there was also the British Mediterranean fleet there), and of course, the Exchequer (by the cause of the great amounts of the subsidies). At this moment the person of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was the same, as the Prime Minister, William Pitt. After all, the Corsican affairs connected mainly to the Home Office, and in minor part to Henry Dundas, the War Secretary, and not any other gentlemen. But: in England to all governmental steps (mainly the financial questions) need the agreement of the House of Commons, so the people of Corsica actually became inferior to

¹² On the different types of the dominium-system: ILONSZKY Gabriella: *Westminsteri változatok: az angolszász politikai rendszerek*. Aula, Budapest, 1998. passim.

¹³ Like interest: Elliot had a proposal to alter the ethnical state of Corsica: 13. June, 1795., he asked prisoners from England, for public works. See: *Correspondance de Sir Gilbert Elliot, Vice-roi de Corse avec le gouvernement anglais*. Ollagnier, Bastia, 1892., 208. (ELLIOT: *Correspondance*)

¹⁴ At the end of the 18th century the Foreign Office was much more feeble, like at the end of the 19th century. The main cause of this weakness, the dynastic politics leaved the international connectionst for the case of the ruler families. Even the King or Queen of England kept the foreign power. See Queen Victoria like the „grandmother of Europe”. See: Muriel CHAMBERLAIN: *Pax Britannica: British foreign policy 1789-1914*. Longman, London, 1988. (CHAMBERLAIN 1988) 11.

the British Parliament. The civil commissioner, or later Viceroy of Corsica, Sir Gilbert Elliot, referred to the Home Secretary.¹⁵ This fragile situation was confusing for even the Corsican politicians.¹⁶

Lord Portland, who became Home Secretary in 1794, had no affinity for the oversea territories. He had lots of problems: the lots of turbulences in the British society, caused by the war, and the French revolution, to escape the riots.¹⁷ The staff of the Home Office had only 13 persons. They simply had no time, or energy for Corsica. According to the sources we can conclude: Lord Portland at the Cabinet sittings did not refer anything about Corsica between 1794 and 1796.¹⁸

So, Corsica – really second time in its history – became a Kingdom.¹⁹ The title of the King became: *Giorgio III Re della Gran Bretagna, d'Irlanda, di Francia, di Corsica*.²⁰ The King's power might to be the same in Great Britain and in Corsica. In the contemporary Europe, the greater part of the states was so-called composite monarchies. They composed more parts, and these parts all were separate countries, with own juridical, political, and historical customs. The King of England was Anglican in England, but Presbyterian in Scotland. He was constitutional King in England, but an „absolute” one in Hanover.²¹ Corsica was only a new factor. Practically, because of the distance, and communicational problems, they ought to initiate the institution of viceroyalty. In the British Empire this was an institution unprecedented. (The governor of Ireland already in the 18th century called to be Viceroy, but it was a popular name, his official title was: Lord Lieutenant.)

As the royal power and prerogatives was wielded by the viceroy, it would be natural, if their power were the same. But for the viceroy the constitution guaranteed the complete right of veto. It's a curious thing: in these days the King of England already had no the right of veto. But the royal prerogatives in England were only constitutional tradition, not a written act. The Corsican constitution was a written document, and it precised the right of veto for the Viceroy. The Whig politicians of the

¹⁵ ELLIOT: Correspondance, 214.

¹⁶ Jean DEFRANCESCHI: *Le royaume anglo-corse, un mauvais départ*, Études Napoléoniennes, 25 (1990), N° 23-24., 228. p.

¹⁷ D. L. MACKAY: *Direction and Purpose in British Imperial Policy, 1783-1801*. The Historical Journal, XVII, 3. (1974), 495-496.

¹⁸ *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot... from 1751 to 1806*. Longmans, London, 1874. 333.

¹⁹ Corsica nominally was kingdom in the 15th century, under the kings of Aragon. Really, its first king was Theodore von Neuhoff for a few months in 1736. Theodore was a legendary adventurer. The viceroyalty was an institution from the history of Aragon, later Spain. It was used to supervise the far colonies. The vice-king had almost the total royal power, included the representation.

²⁰ The title of the King of France was borne by the Kings of England from the Middle Ages to the Irish Union (1801).

²¹ See: J. H. ELLIOTT: *A Europe of composite monarchies*, Past and Present, 1992. November, N° 137. 48-71.

English government, who feared the royal power in England, didn't fear of the strong power of the Corsican Viceroy. So, it was the eminent interest of the English government to have a strong executive power in Corsica. So, the Corsican Viceroy really was not a deputy-king, but he was the man of the English Crown – i.e. the Government.

The most specific part of the English constitution in Corsica was the human rights problem. This question was a well-known field for the Corsican statesmen.²² Paoli, Pozzo di Borgo, and their colleges knew the French declaration of the human rights full well. Paoli – after having lived in England for 20 years – realized that these ideas origins from the English constitutional tradition. The only question was whether which points would be chosen from the English and French models.

Like a written source, you can find only the French constitution, the English documents restricted to the Habeas Corpus Act from 1679, some paragraphs of the Magna Charta from 1215, of the Petition of Right from 1628, the Bill of Rights from 1689. The rolls of the Corsican Parliament use the „*diritto personali*” definition.²³ The 8th chapter of the Corsican constitution 1794 contains the paragraphs of the liberties personal and press.

The Anglo-Corsican constitution contains the fundamental personal rights, primarily the possession rights. This is the trace of the Magna Charta.²⁴ The text contains also the substance of the Habeas Corpus Act.²⁵ It was a very fine step, because this Act was suspended in England at the moment, because of the social disturbances. The freedom of the press was also protected, as the freedom of the travelling.²⁶ The right for petitioning was also fixed. The Corsicans could write to the Parliament, to the Viceroy, even to the King of England: in this latest case they could recall the Viceroy.

The personal rights were very shortly arranged by the Corsican constitution. There were a few questions missed from the Corsican constitution – in spite of the French one. The French constitution deals with the personal equity, the political freedom, the separation of the branches of power. At the end, the public welfare is the main object of the politics.²⁷ The

²² In the Magna Charta (1215), and in the Corsican Statute of San Colombano you can find the first traces of the human rights. The personal freedom, the right of possession, the right of make contracts, for example. See: Antoine LECA: *L'esprit du droit corse d'après le plus ancien code insulaire: Les statuts de San Colombano de 1348*. La Marge, Ajaccio, 1989. 104-105. In 1789 the Cahiers of doléances also claimed the fundamental human rights. See: Simon SCHAMA: *Polgártársak: a francia forradalom krónikája*. Európa, Budapest, 2001. 389-390.

²³ *Procès-verbaux des séances du parlement anglo-corse: 1795-1796*. Ollagnier, Bastia, 1891-1892, BSSHNC, XI-XII^e année, 63. (*Procès*)

²⁴ *Nyugat-Európa alkotmányai, Közgazdasági és Jogi Kiadó, Budapest, 1988*. (Hitherto: *Nyugat-Eu.alk.*) 98-99. Magna Charta, 20. cikkely.

²⁵ This theme also can find in Magna Charta. 39. article. See: *Nyugat-Eu.alk.* 100.

²⁶ Magna Charta, articles 41-42. See: *Nyugat-Eu.alk.* 100.

²⁷ BARNY, Roger: *Les contradictions de l'idéologie révolutionnaire des droits de l'homme 1789-*

French constitution underlines the equal taxation. The freedom of the possession in this text the last item (in the Corsican one there was the first).²⁸ The freedom of the opinion is almost agrees with the English freedom of the press, and the 10. paragraph about the religious tolerance. In the French constitution there is the poor-relief, which is unknown for the English constitution, and needless for Corsica. There was a well-working poor-relief in England, but in Corsica most of the population was awfully poor, and the archaic families resolved the problem of the poor and old members. The only official poor-relief problem was the orphanage.

The religion was the most sensitive question. The Corsicans were severe Catholics. The English were absolutely tolerant in Corsica. Nevertheless, the Catholic religion within Great Britain and Ireland caused deprivation of civil rights. For a Catholic person was impossible to be civil servant, Member of Parliament, or officer in the army. From this point of view, the most critical situation was in Ireland. At the peace treaty at Paris in 1763, Great Britain was obliged to grant the religious tolerance to the colonies. In the case of the former French colonies in the West Indies, or in Canada, it's referred to the Catholics too. Even in the case of Grenada, the protestant habitants were forbidden from the counsel of the island.²⁹ So, the English politics was completely inconsistent to the Catholics. Its treatment depended on the closeness to the English central regions: Ireland was at too close, Corsica or Grenada was too far from England. The stubborn English Protestants were completely suspicious of the Catholics. When most of Europe enjoyed the blessings of the religious tolerance or even the enlightenment in 1778, the modest *Catholic Relief Act* caused an extraordinary poignant anti-catholic disturbances, the Gordon Riots (June, 1780) in London. Meanwhile, in the 1780s there were some important changes in the political life in Ireland. In 1782, Ireland got its own Parliament (named by one of the leading persons: Grattan-Parliament). The Irish Catholics started vehement movements for equal rights, for example the *Volunteer*-, *Catholic Committee*, *United Irishmen* movements, but their mass meetings, and petitions remained unsuccessful. It was the greatest success for the Irish political rights in 1793, when Lord Hobart, the Chief Secretary (almost the Irish prime minister) put over the *Catholic Enfranchisement Act*. But the Irish catholic population got only a passive suffrage, only the protestant persons would be members of the Irish Parliament.³⁰ The catholic question caused a permanent unrest in Ireland in the 1790s. This

1796. Belles Lettres, Paris, 1993. 35-36.

²⁸ *A nagy francia forradalom dokumentumai / összeállította HAHNER Péter*. Osiris, Budapest, 1999. (*Francia forr. Dok.*) 85-86.

²⁹ Edith Mary JOHNSTON: *Ireland in the 18th Century*. Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1974. 166. (JOHNSTON)

³⁰ JOHNSTON: 167.

disturbance was increased by the French menaces in the following years. The Anti-Catholic French Directoire supported zealously the Irish Catholics against the English protestant government.

But in Corsica, the Catholicism was no problem. There was no connection between Corsica and Ireland. The new constitution declared the Catholicism as the „national religion“. Of course, they also declared the tolerance for all of the other faiths (i.e. the Protestantism), but the religious tolerance was not a mass-claim in Corsica.

When the Anglo-Corsican Union was founded, the anti-christianism was on the top in France.³¹ In the May of 1794, the Protestant-dominated regime seems to be the lesser of the two evils. But later on, after 9th of Thermidor, the greater part of the Corsicans were sure in the soon conversion of the Frenchs.³² But at the moment, they were satisfied with the new Government: the new Parliament enacted some new laws, defending the faith and the Catholic Church.³³ The new Corsican Government authorized by the Corsican Parliament took diplomatic steps for the Holy See, to state connections between the state and the Catholic Church for the future. They wanted to make agreement in the question of the number of the parishes, the salary of the priests, and the English-dominated Corsican government asked the agreements of the Pope to all of these. According to the English personages, they proceeded perfectly and generously: for example they agreed to have 5 bishoprics for the 150.000 Corsicans, but it would be absolutely sufficient to have only one.³⁴ They were amicable for the old claim of the Corsicans: they enacted, the Corsican bishops ought to be living in their own bishoprics. The appointment of the bishops in the previous decades belonged to the city of Genova, or later to Paris, now the appointment will be the right of the Holy See – but for an English royal indication, by a list of names (7, 10, and 11th Paragraphs).³⁵ It was ordered, most of the Corsican bishops must be Corsican-born (8th article).³⁶ The inauguration of the bishops must be enacted in the Island, not in Rome, as before. (12th Article).³⁷ The church-possessiones were re-donated, the cloisters were re-started,³⁸ and at the end the exile of the priests who did not oath for

³¹ See: Pierre PASSANO: *Histoire de l'annexion de la Corse*, Horvath, Paris, 1988. 364. Michel VERGÉ-FRANESCHI: *Histoire de la Corse: le pays de grandeur*. Tome 1-2. Félin, Paris, 1995. 430.

³² Jean DEFRANCESCHI: *Le Royaume Anglo-Corse: un mauvais départ*, Études Napoléoniennes, 25 (1990) N° 23-24. 228. (DEFRANCESCHI)

³³ See: the law on the church possessiones, 1. article: See: *Procés*, 283.

³⁴ See: *Procés*, 1891. 278-279.

³⁵ See: *Procés*, 279-280. John Michael Peter MCERLEAN: *The Formative Years of a Russian Diplomat: Charles André Pozzo di Borgo in Corsica, 1789-1796*. PhD these. University of Washington Press, 1967. 267-268.

³⁶ *Procés*, 279.

³⁷ *Procés*, 280.

³⁸ There was a proposition: the minimal number of the friars must be 12. If they would be

the French revolutionary state was repealed. Here remained a tiny problem: the new government (either Paoli, or Elliot) did not want to make the decision, whether which priest is authorized to keep the parish: the present-day, or the exiled one.³⁹ Additionally, it was ordered to fill a priest status in Corsica is necessary to graduate at the future university at Corte at least for three years.⁴⁰ These all were not completely new ideas: you can find them all in the „*Cahiers de doléances*” in 1789. These papers were collected by Pozzo di Borgo, who also assisted to complete the new laws.⁴¹ There were some problems with the tithe (decima). The French revolution repealed the old taxes,⁴² and Elliot didn't want to restitute them, because it would be a very unpopular step. But the catholic priests and the Holy See adhered to them. The Parliament granted to the priests salary from the budget, but this decision augmented the financial troubles.⁴³

The Pope was irritated by these proposals, and refused them all. The main cause of this refusing was that their source was the English – heretic – government. And the Pope devoted to his ancient sovereignty over Corsica.⁴⁴

The personage of the British Government of Corsica aspired to be tactful and fair to the Catholic Church. The religious life flourished again. But there were some incidents, mainly caused by the stubborn English protestant soldiers. For example, the chapel in the citadel of Ajaccio was used to be a depot, so the images of the saints were thrown out. It caused a great scandal⁴⁵. The English politicians might be very anxiously tolerant, but the average Englishman has been suspicious of the „*Popists*” since the time of the Puritans.

We have no time to go into details in the Anglo-Corsican constitution, but do mention a special insufficiency. All over its history, the Corsican people always demanded the right of firearm-license. This was one of the causes of the discord between the Corsican people and Genova. In the midst of the anarchy and vendettas, it was necessary for the Corsican habitants to have arms. In the little villages, the men wore arms even if they went to the back yard. In 1769, it is mentioned that even the priest wore arms in the course of mass.⁴⁶ According to the statistical estimations, the number of the

less, they ought to enter an other abbey. See: *Procés*, 20. article, 281. GREGORY: *Ungovernable Rock*, 93. ; DEFANCESCHI: 229

³⁹ GREGORY: *Ungovernable Rock*, 92. articles 13-16. See: *Procés*, 280-281.

⁴⁰ 22. article. See: *Procés*, 282.

⁴¹ MCERLEAN: 267-268.

⁴² MCERLEAN: 268. p.

⁴³ *Procés*, 285-287. On the Catholic Church's organisation, see: JOLLIVET: 108-110.

⁴⁴ CARRINGTON: *Sources*, 86. ELLIOT: *Correspondance*, 17-18., 25-26., 185.

⁴⁵ GREGORY: *Ungovernable Rock*, 95-96.

⁴⁶ Paul ARRIGHI: *La vie quotidienne en Corse au XVIII^e siècle*. Hachette, Paris, 1970. 101.

armed Corsicans was 30-35,000, and most of them had 2 or 3 firearms in 1768-69. This great number made the public order worse. That's why a serial of arrangements was made against the carrying of arms; it was qualified to be a capital crime, with severe sanctions. The Genovans restricted only one knife per household, and this knife ought to be chained to the kitchen table. Also Pasquale Paoli, as the Frenchs in 1768-69, ordered penalty of death, if anybody didn't give down all of the possessed guns. The Corsicans were not too frightened: only 12,000 old rifles were given down (in spite of the estimated 60-80,000).⁴⁷ Without doubt, all families gave down the oldest trash, and the better pieces were hidden in the bushy or a cave. In the time of the French revolution, by the foundation of the militia, the carrying of arms became legal. In 1794, when the English army came to the island, they were very popular; there was no cause to fear. The right of possessing of arms involved in the Bill of Rights, 1689, one of the constitutional documents of the English history⁴⁸. But when the Anglo-Corsican Constitution was formed, either Paoli, or Sir Gilbert forgot to involve the right of possessing the arms – maybe by cautiousness. But at the same time, they didn't forbid it. And one year later, when the English rule began to be unpopular, it was already nothing to do.

The constitution of the Anglo-Corsican Kingdom was a very special aspire at the end of the 18th century. The English „constitutional missionaries“ were idealist „bel-esprits“ but they soon realized the problematic relations of their ambitions. Meanwhile they tried to endure to the end – till the European war overthrow them. It may be a grotesque idea to think of the historical significance of the Anglo-Corsican Kingdom. But this disastrous history had some importance: on one hand, the experience of the export of the English constitution and another hand, the integration of a foreign country to the British Empire. These were very instructive experiences for the British political leaders. These experiences were utilized later on the most different parts of the Empire, from Malta and Sicily or the Jonic islands to India.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 82-83.

⁴⁸ *Bill of Rights*, 7. article Ld. *Nyugat-Eu.alk.*, 118.