



SCIENCE AND RESEARCH CENTRE KOPER
Institute of Historical Studies
ZNANSTVENO-RAZISKOVALNO SREDIŠČE KOPER
Inštitut za zgodovinske študije

International conference
BORDER IN ARMS:
POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC
1914–1941

Koper, 24th and 25th May, 2018

Mednarodna znanstvena konferenca
OBOROŽENA MEJA:
POLITIČNO NASILJE V SEVERNEM JADRANU 1914–1941
Koper, 24. in 25. maj 2018

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS
PROGRAM IN POVZETKI

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KOPER 2018

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NORTHERN ADRIATIC 1914–1941**
**Mednarodna znanstvena konferenca OBOROŽENA MEJA: POLITIČNO NASILJE V
SEVERNEM JADRANU 1914–1941**
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FOREWORD

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE BORDER IN ARMS: POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC 1914–1941

Background

Throughout the past two decades, scholarship focused upon the study of political violence and terrorism has rapidly increased. With the powerful aftereffects of contemporary terrorist attacks, interest in those pursuing political, social, ethnic or religious objectives through violence found an obvious place in the academy and outside it. However, the discourse and study of violence and terrorism is often based around a strict interpretation of good versus evil, legitimate versus illegitimate, minority over majority. Therefore, the aim of this international conference is to understand these actors from a variety of perspectives and to decipher, interpret and challenge the dominant, State-centric perspective on political violence and terrorism offered by traditional visions of power relations.

Content and goals

The conference focuses primarily on forms of political violence by examining its relationship to identity and ideology from a historical perspective in the region of the northern Adriatic that today is shared by Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. The time frame spans from the beginning of World War I in July 1914 to April 1941, when the Italian army invaded neighboring Yugoslavia in World War II.

The Great War and the disappearance of the Habsburg Empire turned the northern Adriatic in a “shatter zone”, where the ambiguity of the situation created a space without clear and defined state authority. The Austrian Littoral has been replaced by the Italian Venezia Giulia, however this *sortie de guerre* has not been linear. The transition lasted several years and has been characterized by extreme political instability, economic insecurity, military and cultural demobilization of hearts and minds and it became a laboratory

for new forms of military and paramilitary violence. The question of how different societies managed to interact despite volatile and hostile political conditions is of enormous importance to the history of the northern Adriatic region and of Europe in general. Therefore, the history of violence in the northern Adriatic has to be explored in terms of larger, global, developments such as revolution, imperial collapse, and ethnic conflict in South-Central Europe, and in this sense the conference will examine how the meaning of violence was ‚handled‘ in everyday life by means of rituals and legal, social, and discursive practices in the context of the new order that emerged after the war. It revolves around questions about the legitimacy of the use of force and of strategies of violence, and about continuities and discontinuities beyond one of the most significant ruptures in the region’s twentieth century history.

The conference brings together a group of scholars working interdisciplinarily on aspects of political violence in the Adriatic region, but some papers also deal with other European regions, which allows comparative analysis. The presented papers deal with the following general but interrelated topics:

- Forms of demobilization in the northern Adriatic after World War I
- Forms of military, paramilitary and police violence;
- Public violence and its state and non-state actors;
- Rhetoric of violence (popular images, narratives etc.);
- Gender and violence.

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PROGRAMME

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

BORDERS IN ARMS: POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN ADRIATIC, 1914–1941

Koper, 24th and 25th May, 2018

Pretorska palača, Titov trg 3, Koper

ZRS Koper, Garibaldijeva 1, 6000 Koper

THURSDAY, 24th May, 2018

9:30–10:00

Welcome remarks

10:00–11:30

Matteo Millan (University of Padua): *Domestic Threats? The Impact of Social Conflicts and Private Policing on State Legitimacy before (and after) the Great War*

Stefan Wedrac (Austrian Academy of Sciences): *Totalitarianism, the Habsburg State and the Loyalty of the Citizens in Trieste 1914-1918*

Petra Svoltjšak (Science and Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences / University of Nova Gorica): *Between two Fires – the Austrian and Italian Political Violence in the Austrian Littoral 1914 – 1918*

Discussion

11:30–12:00 Coffee break

12:00–13:30

John Paul Newman (University of Maynooth): *Local, Regional, and Transnational Interactions of Violence in the South Slav lands, 1918–1941*

Giulia Albanese (University of Padua): *Political Violence and Fascism*

Borut Klabjan (Science and Research Centre Koper / European University Institute): *Borders of Violence: Continuity and Change in the Northern Adriatic before and after World War I*

Discussion

13:30–15:00 Lunch

15:00–16:30

Ana Cergol Paradiž (University of Ljubljana): *The Slovene-Italian Relations in the field of Bio-Politics before World War II*

Vanesa Matajc (University of Ljubljana): *Literary representations of Fascist violence against the “allogenic” Slovene and Jewish communities in the Julian March*

Vida Rožac Darovec (Science and Research Centre Koper): *“There was not anyone in our village completely against the fascists...” The Archaeology of Remembrance on Fascism in the Istrian Countryside*

Discussion

16:30–17:00 Coffee break

17:00–18:30

Ante Bralić (University of Zadar): *Political Violence in the Northern Adriatic and its Reflections on Dalmatia*

Andreas Guidi (EHESS Paris / Humboldt University, Berlin): *The Emergence of Fascism in Zadar. The Economy of Violence between Order and Disorder*

Ivan Jeličić (University of Rijeka): *National and Political Violence in a Nation-State Periphery: Fiume 1918–1924*

Discussion

19:00 Dinner

FRIDAY, 25th May, 2018

9:30–11:00

Marco Bresciani (University of Verona): *Fascist Violence in a Post-Habsburg Borderland: the Case of the Post-War Upper Adriatic (1919–1924)*

Vanni D'Alessio (University of Naples): *Post-War Violence and Political Activism and Identifications in Central Istria, 1918–1929*

Maura Hametz (Old Dominion University): *The Special Tribunal and Quotidian Intimidation in the Eastern Borderland, 1929–1933*

Discussion

11:00–11:30 Coffee break

11:30–13:00

Matic Batič (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Violence Carved in Stone. Italian War Memorials in Venezia Giulia after World War I*

Klaus Tragbar (University of Innsbruck): *The Alphabet of Architecture: P like Power, R like Rule, and V like Violence*

Tullia Catalan (University of Trieste): *The Violence of Language. The Anti-Slavism in the Border Narratives after World War I*

Discussion

13:00–14:30 Lunch

14:30–16:00

Egon Pelikan (Science and Research Centre Koper): *The Church, the State and Minorities along the “Border in Arms”*

Gašper Mithans (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Oppression of religious Minorities in Venezia Giulia*

Laura Lee Downs (European University Institute): *“La più serena italianizzazione?” Social Action and Nationalist Politics on the Giulian linguistic Frontier, 1919–1978*

Discussion

16:00–16:30 Coffee break

16:30–18:00

Gorazd Bajc (University of Maribor): *Internments after World War I. The case of women from Venezia Giulia*

Marta Verginella (University of Ljubljana): *The Antifascism of Slovene Women from Venezia Giulia: Memory and Oblivion*

Manca Grgić Renko (University of Ljubljana): *Representation and Resistance: Women as Literary Objects/Subjects of Antifascist Literature*

Discussion

19:00 Dinner

ABSTRACTS

DOMESTIC THREATS? THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND PRIVATE POLICING ON STATE LEGITIMACY BEFORE (AND AFTER) THE GREAT WAR

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On February 1902, a major strike broke out in Trieste. Governmental repression – led by general Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf – was brutal, leaving 14 people dead and several injured. Historians have highlighted the imbrication of social, political, and nationalist conflicts in the Littoral to explain the causes and the fear originated by the strike. Historian Lawrence Sondhaus went further and stated that the strike was crucial in fueling the anti-Italian attitudes of Conrad, eventually “satisfied” in 1915. At the same time, the strike, and its repression, originated a debate in Italy on the need to establish stronger employers’ associations with anti-strike functions.

The paper starts from the apparently minor and far in time case of the 1902 strike in Trieste but adopt a comparative perspective based on the research carried out within the ERC-StG project “The Dark Side of the Belle Époque”. The paper pursues two aims. First, it analyses how repression (or lack of it) affected state legitimacy in the pre-WWI period, and its long-term consequences. Brutal repression can be unsustainable in a mass society; conversely, lack of repression may fuel the emergence of private police and strikebreaking groups which can challenge state legitimacy and loyalty. Second, it examines the role played by social conflicts in creating perceptions of the (internal and external) enemy, forms of ultra-patriotism and ultra-nationalism, as well as ideas of a hierarchical society. Social fear and expansionist aims, ethnic cleavages and processes of political radicalization affected transfer processes which contributed to radicalize social and national contrapositions.

The paper aims to address the general underestimation of the importance of internal factors in creating forms of violent mobilization and radicalization in the years leading to the First World War. These processes created enduring political, cultural as well as practical and organizational scripts and

learning process whose impact affected how war was conducted and may concur to explain the emergence of post-World War I political violence.

TOTALITARISM, THE HABSBURG STATE AND THE LOYALTY OF THE CITIZENS IN TRIESTE 1914–1918

Stefan WEDRAC

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Trieste was before World War I one of the most dynamic cities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Social, economic and nationalistic conflicts were on the order of the day. In the fairly liberal Austrian climate of the post-1867 monarchy, the central imperial administration intervened only if grave nationalistic agitations forced her to do so. Nationalistic agitations were mostly attributed to a small minority in the national groups and not really a real threat to the existence of the state. During wartime, however, the authorities (police, governor, military) assumed more and more a general and very repressive stance against real and presumed nationalists. Both Slavic and Italian citizens of the monarchy came under pressure often because of vague denunciations and/or suspicion because of their membership on associations that were considered more or less nationalistic. Many people were put into prison or confined to the house without proper trial. This process alienated big parts of the population from the idea of a Habsburg state, as the liberal climate before the war vanished and was replaced by a repressive stance that left less and less desire to be a subject of Austria-Hungary.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES – THE AUSTRIAN AND ITALIAN POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE AUSTRIAN LITTORAL 1914–1918

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The paper focuses on ways and means of interwar violence against civilian population in the Austrian Littoral during the First World War, which was marked by an extraordinary position, being a border region, a contested region between two states (unredeemed territories), which resulted in the opening of the Isonzo front in May 1915 and destructive consequences for the civilian population. In this respect, the periodization of the war with a special focus on this part of the Habsburg monarchy is of crucial importance; the authoritarian Austrian war regime in fact affected different ethnic and political groups in Littoral, according to the position of Italy in negotiating the best possible result for its neutrality or/and entrance in war. On the other hand, the final Italian decision to enter the war on the Entente side, enabled Italy at first the realization of the final stage unification of the state by “redeeming the unredeemed territories” between Trento and Trieste, regardless of the fact, that these territories had been partially populated by non-Italian population. The Italian occupation, especially the first weeks of the occupation, brought about some direct acts of violence against civilian population, such as decimations, arrests, internments, evacuations. Later, the physical violence was replaced by more refined and persuasive political means in order to prepare the occupied population for a future annexation to Italy. The paper would thus analyse the methods, reasons, target groups of state violence and put them into legal context of the laws on war and of the state laws that allowed for the use of violence in order to subdue or discipline the (future) citizens.

LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND TRANSNATIONAL INTERACTIONS OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH SLAV LANDS, 1918–1941

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The unification of the South Slav state at the end of the First World War brought into and around the borders of a single state multiple imperial shatter-zones, various peoples mobilized into different wartime causes, and numerous cultures of violence. And as the organisers of this conference note, the South Slav lands were subject to the dramatic global political and military transformations of the time, as waves of revolution and counter-revolution crashed into the area and merged with pre-existing political and military traditions. These changes brought into the same sphere otherwise unconnected violent actors: the rural violence and counter-revolution associated with Habsburg state collapse, regular and irregular military forces connected to Serbia's 'culture of victory', ethnic violence on the Italo-Slav border on the Adriatic, and so on. This created a dialectic of adversarial and antagonistic relations, but also new opportunities for alliance and collaboration (e.g., veterans of Serbia's guerrilla conflict with the Ottoman empire and members of ORJUNA, former Habsburg officers opposed to South Slav unification and D'Annunzio's "Fiume Adventure"). My paper explores the varying interactions between these cultures of violence, both in the last years of the "Greater War" (1917-1923) and in the longer-term history of the region. It argues that to properly understand political violence in the region, a three-storied approach should be taken that analyses how violent actors were influenced and linked by local, regional (Yugoslav), and international/transnational factors. The paper will show that although the high tide of violence in the South Slav lands had subsided by the middle of the 1920s, the rhetoric and experiences of this period became absorbed into the state's society and political culture, re-emerging in the period from 1935-1945.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND FASCISM

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Starting from an analysis of the changes which emerged in the historiography on fascism on the theme of violence, the paper aims at reflecting on the continuities and discontinuities in the role of fascist violence as both an instrument of repression and of creation of acquiescence and consent. Attention will specially be devoted to the ways in which the practices of violence interacted with languages of violence, and how this rhetoric changed depending on the actors involved and on the territories taken into consideration. This will permit me to consider the specificities of the rhetoric and practices of violence at the boundaries of the country (and especially the north-eastern ones) and to consider how the use of violence was related to the issue of citizenship and its various possible declinations.

BORDERS OF VIOLENCE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC BEFORE AND AFTER WORLD WAR I

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This paper analyzes forms of political violence in the Northern Adriatic area in the first half of the twentieth century. The existing international scholarship has been concentrated mainly on national cases, while the regional and transnational perspectives remained often neglected. This study intends to re-direct the attention from the national to the regional level and analyze the case of the former Austrian Littoral (renamed Venezia Giulia after 1918), where “cultures of defeat” of two victorious allies overlapped, intertwined and clashed. If on one side victorious Italy developed a culture of defeat defined mutilated victory (*vittoria mutilata*), on the other side the Slovenes in the new Kingdom of Yugoslavia considered the region their “Alsace and Lorraine”. These two attitudes provoked a long-term period of bilateral tension on the international level and several forms of violence based on ideological and ethnic confrontation on the local level. Special emphasis will be dedicated to aspects of continuity and change before and after World War I. Especially the postwar period has been characterized by extreme political instability, economic insecurity and violence. The transition lasted several years and has been characterized by precarious military and cultural demobilization of heart and minds and the region became a laboratory for new forms of military and paramilitary violence. This occurred in the vacuum left by the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, however at the same time violence served as an adjunct to the new State power and its legitimization.

Based on archival research the paper will investigate forms of military and paramilitary violence but also public violence and the role of its state and non-state actors (fascist squads, nationalist organizations, demobilized soldiers) in its longer perspective, with the aim to overcome predestinated time-frames and to show the persistence of certain practices of political violence in diverse historical contexts.

THE SLOVENE-ITALIAN RELATIONS IN THE FIELD OF BIO-POLITICS BEFORE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

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Previous research has indicated that the Italian fascists addressed the problem of the Slavic population more in terms of cultural than biological racism. Even though the fascists emphasized the inferiority of the Slavic culture, they, for example, did not discourage marriages between Italian men and Slovene women; even during the World War II, they did not implement any special eugenic measures against the Slavs. In 1941, when the well-known Slovenian eugenicist Božo Škerlj tried to demonstrate in the Italian eugenic journal “La difesa della razza” the many racial differences between those living in Italy and those living on the Yugoslav coast of the Adriatic sea, the editor of the journal dismissed his article arguing that the inhabitants from the east and west Adriatic coasts belonged to the same race.

Slovene and Italian eugenicists and anthropologists cooperated before and even during the World War II. Especially the most important Slovene anthropologist, Božo Škerlj and the well-known Italian demographer Corrado Gini had a vivid correspondence and exchanged views about various scientific and political topics,

By analyzing eugenics and anthropological articles of some Slovenian and Italian authors (especially Škerlj and Gini) as well as their correspondence and other ego-documents, I will try to interpret their transnational cooperation. How did they influence each other? I will also try to analyze, how they “scientifically” or biologically defined the “Italian” and the “Slavs” and how their attitudes about that changed through time. How did the political changes influence their relationships and their view about each other and about eugenics?

LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF FASCIST VIOLENCE AGAINST THE “ALLOGENIC” SLOVENE AND JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE JULIAN MARCH

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Due to the Fascist appropriation of the policy of Italian Irredentism, the status of *allogeni* was ascribed to Slovene and Croatian ethnic communities that inhabited the Slovene-Italian border space during the period of the Fascist government in Italy. However, a “heterogeneous” status was ascribed also to Jewish Italian population, since promulgations of the Fascist Racial laws (*leggi razziali*, from October 1938 onwards). The imagological reading of the two novels in this paper will comparatively focus on the representations of the community which imagined itself as Slovene and the community, i.e. those parts of Italian population in the Julian March which either imagined itself as Jewish or had a Jewish identity ascribed to it. Due to the “biologicistic reasoning” of the *leggi razziali*, the Jewish population lost the legal possibility of assimilation into the Italian society. Thus, the position of Jewish ethnic community as newly identified “heterogeneous” one, compared with the position of the “Slavic” communities in the Julian March, was essentially different. However, the strategies and tactics of resistance against (forced) assimilation practiced by the members of Slovene community in the Julian March led to consequences which in juridical aspects and practices of everyday life, ranging from explicit or implied restrictions of the civil rights to physical violence and extinction, reveal similar conditions of all “heterogeneous” communities in the Julian March. Slovene literature focused on representations of the Slovene community in its conditions under the Fascist violence. On the other hand, Slovene literature scarcely paid attention to the similarities between the positions of different “heterogeneous” communities in the border space under the Fascist regime, although the threat of either cultural and/or physical extinction was shared by all of them. This is indirectly and subtly suggested in Alojz Rebula’s novel *Kačja roža* (*Snake Flower*, 1994). It is explicitly represented in the novel of Croatian writer Daša Drndić *Sonnenschein* (2007). The paper wants to point out some similarities and dif-

ferences in imaging Slovene and Jewish situations under the Fascist violence, as they are represented in Rebula's and Drndić's novels.

**“THERE WAS NOT ANYONE IN OUR VILLAGE COMPLETELY
AGAINST THE FASCISTS...” THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF
REMEMBRANCE OF FASCISM IN THE ISTRIAN COUNTRYSIDE**

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The paper presupposes a concept of memory developed in the 1980s in the framework of the “Popular Memory Group” at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham. The research was focused on the interaction between “private” and “public” memories. Two of the central claims of this concept are that memory is a construct and that memories are made in such a way that makes us relatively comfortable with our lives in the community. Memories which are painful and incompatible with the current identity, on the other hand, are pushed into oblivion. In my oral history research of the Istrian countryside during the time of fascist rule, I have concentrated on the way in which the memories of ordinary people are harmonized or disharmonized with official interpretations of the past. Furthermore, I also try to show how individual memory is interwoven with collective national representations of the past. As pointed out by Marta Verginella, some aspects of the history of fascism are still poorly researched. These are mainly issues dealing with the “support the fascist regime enjoyed among the various layers of the population, as well as the question of the social and economic impact of material benefits which Mussolini’s regime provided in the Primorska regions as elsewhere in Italy to the poorest [...]” Verginella sees the reasons for this situation in the “delicacy of the issues, which even now do not allow to draw simple dividing lines between Italians – fascists, and Slovenes – antifascists, i.e. do not allow that unique, black-and-white display of history, which is the only functional ‘ideal’ national narrative” (Verginella, *Primorski upor fašizmu 1920–1941*, *Slovenska matica*, 2008, pp. 10, 11).

The paper mainly focuses on the stories of witnesses about the time of fascism, containing both the memories that coincide with a national collective memory (relating to assimilation pressures by Italians and resistance of Slovenes), as well as memories describing the suppressed and traumatic past (relating to various forms of cooperation with the fascist regime).

POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC AND ITS REFLECTIONS ON DALMATIA

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Political violence in the North Adriatic, especially in Istria and Rijeka (Fiume) had reflections on the situation in southern part of Adriatic. Unresolved territorial question as consequence of World War I was a sparking issue, which profoundly shook political, ethnical and social relationships in Dalmatia. This violence was especially strong in period from November 1918 until the Rapallo Treaty in November 1920. Political and military actions of Gabriele D'Annunzio in Rijeka had great impact on political violence in Dalmatian capital Zadar. Italian army had occupied northern part of Dalmatia and in this part Croats and Serbs were exposed to violence of Italian side. In southern part, Italian minority was persecuted by Yugoslav side. The paper will elaborate different forms of inter-ethnic violence.

THE EMERGENCE OF FASCISM IN ZADAR. THE ECONOMY OF VIOLENCE BETWEEN ORDER AND DISORDER

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Within the history of Fascism, the territories annexed by Italy after World War One have become an established field of study which has seen the emergence of “Borderland Fascism” as a category of analysis. In this regard, especially South Tyrol and the Julian March have been considered, whereas Dalmatia – and Zara/Zadar in particular – have remained marginal in spite of the symbolic value attached to this territory within the rhetoric of Fascism. Few studies of Borderland Fascism have mobilized an actor-centred approach which could link a micro-level analysis to phenomena broader than Fascism itself, such as the post-imperial transformation in former Habsburg territories. In other words, more attention has been given to how Fascism expanded in this region from the centre, rather than reflecting on the transformation of local societies from imperial to national institutions. In my paper, I will adopt this second perspective through the prism of the trajectory of local Fascism in Zara/Zadar and the role of violence in their activism. I will consider how they, from a newly acquired territory severed from its hinterland, perceived politics at the centre, redefined categories of political and racial belonging, organized their modes of action and the semantics of their discourse. Their trajectory before the March on Rome becomes important to approach the economy of violence which made possible the emergence and the legitimization of Fascism in the Northern Dalmatian town. Lastly, the paper will reflect on how violence became disciplined within the Gleichschaltung of institution under control of the Fascist Party. This implied on the one hand a symbolic recognition of these actors as “pioneers” of a new political order, but at the same time their marginalization in political institutions, where bureaucrats sent by the Fascist Party from Italy occupied the key positions.

NATIONAL AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN A NATION-STATE PERIPHERY: FIUME 1918–1924

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The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was particularly dramatic for the city of Fiume, now Rijeka, since it marked the beginning of radical national and political conflicts that lasted until 1924. The former Habsburg Hungarian periphery, due to its disputed administrative position, easily succumbed to rival nation-state projects. Moreover, the presence of an organized working-class party, complicated and increased the number of political contenders. The long transition towards a defined state belonging, the lack of rule of law, and the D'Annunzio's political experimentation increased an already instable local environment. Consequently, the newly created Free State of Fiume suffered from multiple violent actions that ended up destroying this product of international compromise.

Though the paper seeks to present frequent episodes of violence occurred in town from the dismemberment of the Dual Monarchy to the annexation of the city to Italy, it will deal primarily with the 1921-1924 events. In particular, the episodes of violence will be conceptualized and inserted inside the larger struggle between opposing national (or un-national) options, as well as challenging political actors. On one side, the paper will show how dominant political party armed groups were or were not transposed in the periphery (fascists vs communists). On the other side, the paper will analyze how Italian nationalists' violent acts were morally legitimized to justify a narration of rightful nationalist claims while the opponents' reactions were disqualified for their supposed lack of national attachment. Anyhow, the paper will distance from D'Annunzio's political and historiographic hegemonic account, focusing on the emerged violence as a result of a lack of post Habsburg stability and as a research of alternative forms of political legitimization.

FASCIST VIOLENCE IN A POST-HABSBURG BORDERLAND: THE CASE OF THE POST-WAR UPPER ADRIATIC (1919–1924)

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Fascist violence has been usually described as the armed branch of the Italian nationalism and understood as the most devastating trigger (and outcome) of the ongoing national conflict between the Italian and the Slovenian and Croatian communities in the Upper Adriatic. Accordingly, “anti-Slavism” has been interpreted as the most powerful driving force of the Italian Fascism since 1919.

This paper intends to question this nationally-focussed interpretation and to address the following question: in the chaotic conditions of the post-war transition and of the multiple social and political conflicts which took place in the aftermath of the Habsburg collapse, which were the peculiarities, targets, and functions of the Fascist violence, if any?

Obviously, the political culture of Fascism was imbued with the language and rhetoric of the Italian radical nationalism, which tended to represent the “Slavs” as the by-product of the process of “de-nationalisation” of the Italians under the Habsburg rule. However, in front of the unexpected, severe difficulties of the Italian state- and nation-building, in the post-war period, the Fascist movement aimed at removing by violence any legacy of the Empire and accordingly fighting the “Bolsheviks” and the “Slavs”, in turn perceived and understood as “Austrophiles” (*austriacanti*).

In the post-war turmoil the Fascist movement thus became an exceptionally effective driving force for mobilisation and organisation of groups, which aimed at actively breaking with the Habsburg past, substituting the former ruling class and building a new political and social order. Not incidentally, in a transitional context where national identifications were partially in the making, Fascist radicalism was able to attract even people who were represented, or represented themselves, as “Slavs”.

POST-WAR VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND IDENTIFICATIONS IN CENTRAL ISTRIA, 1918–1929

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This paper will discuss the appearance of violence in Istrian social life after the Great War; it will analyze the development of political and cultural identifications, activism and mobilization in the central area of the peninsula. This paper will focus on the highly contested town of Pazin and on the small towns, burgs and villages of the inner part of the Istrian peninsula, and on the various actors who were involved in the political and cultural mobilization in pre- and post-war societies, such as: irredentists, liberals, clericals, church figures, soldiers, socialists, fascists, and pro-Yugoslavs. In the frameworks of war, Italian occupation and annexation, and of the following fascistization of political and social life, Istria experienced a restriction of liberties and the state use of violence. This paper will discuss how during and after the war violence became a crucial element of local political life, activism and differentiation between generations and ideological choices. In this framework, this paper will analyze how the use of violence deeply influenced social life and the way people perceived the possibility to engage in political and cultural activities, both in the public space and in underground clandestine activism.

THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL AND QUOTIDIAN INTIMIDATION IN THE EASTERN BORDERLAND, 1929–1933

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In 1926, Mussolini's government created the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State as the judicial body empowered to rule in cases brought against "enemies of the state." By 1929, the Court's attention focused on threats emanating from the eastern border territories and perceptions of the "Slavic, terrorist" threat. In the most famous case, the bombing of *Il Popolo di Trieste* in 1930, the Tribunal sentenced four to death by firing squad and dozens of others to prison terms ranging from several months to thirty years. Much attention focuses on the extraordinary verdict and severe penalties that became part of the narrative of Fascist persecution of Slovene and Croat and in the creation of a Slavic martyrology of victimhood in the years leading up to World War II. Yet, this focus on the extreme penalty and persecution deflects attention from the everyday effects of the new court and its power to suppress dissent in the borderland. In the majority of cases that came before the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State, legal punishments were not inflicted, rather the justices dismissed defendants with the ruling "non luogo di procedere" or "no grounds to proceed." This paper will explore how this ruling, handed down for the majority of defendants who came before the court in dozens of cases pursued from the tip of Pula to the northernmost point of Gorizia, served as a legal tool to cloak Fascist repression and persecution in the mantle of the pursuit of justice. Arrest, torture, and imprisonment were real threats to local populations, but the Fascist legal responsibility for persecution could be mitigated and charges of unfair prosecution could be absolved with the judge's ruling of "non luogo di procedere."

VIOLENCE CARVED IN STONE. ITALIAN WAR MEMORIALS IN VENEZIA GIULIA AFTER WORLD WAR I

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International historiography (George Mosse, Jay Winter) has already paid a lot of attention to the commemorative practices employed throughout Europe following World War I. The general scientific consensus is that they emphasized the value of sacrifice in order to give the war experience a positive meaning and 'explain' the importance of war to the nation. Such was also the case in post-war Italy, where the need for legitimization was especially important to the political elite, as the state was engulfed in a maelstrom of political, economic and social instability. Accordingly, numerous monuments dedicated to fallen war heroes, *zone sacre*, military cemeteries and other sites of memory were erected; they served as one of the factors establishing the narrative of victorious war, which was conceptualized as the successful completion of the long-desired aims of the *risorgimento*.

The paper will analyse one distinct aspect of commemorative practices in post-war Italy. Geographically, it will focus on the newly conquered nationally mixed province of *Venezia Giulia* (mostly made up of lands belonging to the former Austrian Littoral). *Venezia Giulia* offers an especially relevant case study, as, due to the presence of the Slovene population in the region, the monuments to fallen soldiers and officers did not represent only sites of memory and mourning for the Italian nation, but also sites of national demarcation. They served as a physical reminder of Italian claims over these lands, for which so much 'Italian blood' had been spilled. In this regard they can be conceptualized as a form of violence against the local Slovene population, which also perceived them in this way.

THE ALPHABET OF ARCHITECTURE: P LIKE POWER, R LIKE RULE, AND V LIKE VIOLENCE

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Architecture is a language, which can be read as a book. The single elements of architecture, their forms shape and their arrangement, their details and their material form an alphabet, which combine to be a statement. From the beginning of architecture, this statement always was connected to the expression of power, rule, and violence. A Roman triumphant arch, a medieval castle, a Renaissance palace, they all express not only design, functionality, and construction, but significance as well.

So does fascist architecture. When after World War I the Kingdom of Italy took possession of the former Habsburg territories in northern Italy, it developed several strategies of appropriation for those new territories. This process of Italianisation was considerably intensified after Fascism's rise to power in 1922. Architecture and urbanism played a key role in it. This can be demonstrated with buildings like the *Monumento alla Vittoria* in Bozen/Bolzano (Marcello Piacentini, 1928), which commemorates a Roman triumphant arch, the town hall in Meran/Merano (Ettore Sottsass sr. and Willy Weihenmeyer, 1927–1931), whose tower cites medieval Italian town halls, the castle-shaped ossuary in Oslavia (Ghino Venturi, 1938), which overlooks the Isonzo Valley and responds to Gorizia Castle, and the monumental ossuary in Redipuglia (Giovanni Greppi and Giannino Castiglioni, 1935–1938), which commemorates the battle order of an entire army. Finally, the *Narodni Dom* in Trieste (Max Fabiani, 1902–1904), built by the local Slovene community, burnt by Italian fascists in 1920 and urbanistically marginalised in 1923 by a new building in front of it, is an example not only for symbolic, but for direct violence through architecture.

The paper explores both urbanism and architecture and their elements as symbols and expressions of power, rule and violence against the background of Fascism's rise to power and the process of Italianisation in northern Italy.

THE VIOLENCE OF LANGUAGE. THE ANTI-SLAVISM IN THE BORDER NARRATIVES AFTER WORLD WAR I

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During World War I the violence of the language used by some writers, journalists and irredentist intellectuals against the so-called “Slavs” became extreme in the outline of the internal and external enemy, through the use of stereotypes and metaphors, which lasted in time and settled in the collective mentality of the Italian population of Trieste.

In this literary production, published in Italy, the Slavic enemy was often animalized to justify the accusations of incivility and barbarism raised against him, which were soon accompanied by those of innate immorality of customs.

The War represented a fundamental watershed, which greatly influenced the following production of these Italian intellectuals, men and women, who in their writings resumed again the question of anti-Slavism, but faced it differently from previous decades, when next to the Slavic enemy there was also the German enemy to fight against.

In this period terms such as race and blood began to circulate more frequently in the writings of these intellectuals living at the border.

This paper focuses on some case studies, analysing the writings of some journalists and writers, men and women, in the immediate post-war years. Particular attention will be given to the production of children’s literature, intended to convey a message of hate that will find its ideal humus in fascism to spread.

THE CHURCH, THE STATE AND MINORITIES ALONG THE “BORDER IN ARMS”

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The history of the Catholic Church in Venezia Giulia has already been a topic of extensive research. The existing research has, in many ways, been stimulated by ideological and political motivation – on the Slovene side by the difficult situation of Slovenes and Croats along the “border in arms” (in the context of Yugoslav-Italian relations), on the Italian side by the political competition between Social Democrats and Christian Democrats (in the context of Italian internal politics). On the other hand, this research has been marked by the shortage of key archival sources – of the Christian Social Movement in Venezia Giulia and of the Vatican archives for the period of Pope Pius XI.

Two events that have taken place over the past dozen years offer the possibility to write the history of the Catholic Church in Venezia Giulia *ex novo*:

- the discovery of the archive of Engelbert Besednjak, now preserved by the Provincial Archives in Nova Gorica (since 2007);
- the opening of the Vatican archives for the period of Pope Pius XI’s pontificate (gradual openings since 2006).

With the opening of the Vatican archives for the period of Pius XI, the story is, as far as primary sources are concerned, complete. Today, it is possible to describe the history of the relationship between the Church and the state in Fascist Italy, as well as the specifics of the relationship between the Church and fascism in Venezia Giulia, based on extensive and diverse archival material.

The following paper analyses the history of the Church in Venezia Giulia in the light of the newly available fonds in the Vatican.

OPPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN *VENEZIA GIULIA*

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The Fascist regime's attitude towards non-Catholic "minority" religions, especially Evangelical Churches, in Italy was deeply conditioned by the relations between the State authorities and the Holy See. Even though some incidents have been registered before 1929, the year in which the Lateran Pacts and the so-called law on "admitted cults" ["*la legge sui culti ammessi*"] have been passed, the signing of the treaty is a turning point. In the Lateran Treaty the Catholic Church in Italy was explicitly recognized as the state religion. The law on admitted religious denominations, which is still in force today, should have regulated the profession and activities of various minority religions in the country and was at first well accepted by the religious minorities. However, it actually served as means for the Fascist authorities to introduce the policy of unequal treatment of religions by reconciling with the Catholics on the one hand, and returning to jurisdictionalism for non-Catholics on the other. The law provided a system suitable for guaranteeing political control and extensive interference with religions apart from Catholicism in a series of serious restrictions on the freedom of religion. It led to a period of ever increasing hostility towards the religious minorities, most likely due to the fear of anti-fascist propaganda by their representatives. While these "admitted" denominations were tolerated, all their activities were banished from the public sphere, especially religious propaganda, which was strongly opposed by the regime and the Catholic Church.

In Venezia Giulia the political violence towards some non-Catholic religious communities intensified in the years before the World War II, most evidently in the case of the Jews after the introduction of the Italian Racial Laws in 1938. Before, Jewish community in Trieste was very influential, with high-ranking members also in the Fascist Party. Another religious denomination that stands out due to experienced oppression by the regime and the opposition of the Catholic Church, are evangelicals, particularly Adventists. Among leaders of the local Adventist Church were Slovenes, a "double minority", persecuted also due to association with anti-Fascist activities.

“LA PIÙ SERENA ITALIANIZZAZIONE?” SOCIAL ACTION AND NATIONALIST POLITICS ON THE GIULIAN LINGUISTIC FRONTIER, 1919–1978

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This paper follows a few of the high points in the long career of a fascinating socio-educative project – *Assistenza all'Italia Redenta* (Aid to Italy's Redeemed Lands) – which was spearheaded by a group of middle and upper-class Italian women who had seen service as nurses on the Alpine front during WWI. Italia Redenta went to work in the immediate aftermath of World War I, distributing social and medical assistance in Italy's newly expanded borderlands on the Austrian and Balkan frontiers. In the Balkan frontier districts, with which I am primarily concerned, Italia Redenta opened sewing workshops for impoverished and unemployed women to which were attached medical dispensaries and nursery schools for their young children (3-6) in the predominantly slavophone villages of Istria, Dalmatia and Venezia Giulia. Italia Redenta was concerned above all with the “patriotic penetration” of mixed language and slavophone families via socio-medical and educational institutions that targeted the very youngest members of these families through programs that were explicitly conceived as instruments of assimilation and Italianization. The organization prospered under fascism, then expanded dramatically during the years 1929-43, with more than 200 schools serving over 10.000 children in these predominantly rural districts of highly dispersed habitat. After the war, Italia Redenta would continue to provide nursery school education and other social services to children in Italy's northern and eastern frontier districts until 1977.

The themes of this research include: the porous frontiers between social and political/nationalist/irridentist action and the way those porous frontiers opened opportunities for public and political action to women. But the Italia Redenta research also opens up the question of socio-educative projects in the service of the “patriotic and political penetration” of slavophone or mixed language populations in extremely mixed borderlands that, after 1945 also constituted a major east-west frontier in Cold War Europe. Ita-

lia Redenta's work thus took on a new political significance not only for the national government in Rome but for the Allied occupation in Venezia Giulia (June 1945–October 1954) and for the geopolitics of the Cold War more broadly.

Were I solely concerned with events on the Italian side of the very porous Cold War frontier between capitalism and socialism, Italy and Yugoslavia, this project could have easily been titled "From the patriotic penetration of slavophone populations to the avant-garde of early education during Italy's First Republic". But one of the most fascinating questions driving the project is: what happened to all the Italia Redenta schools (and their teachers) in Tito's socialist republic once Istria and Dalmatia had been shaved off and allocated to Yugoslavia (late 1940s–mid-1950s)? What did local and national actors choose to do with this rich legacy of schools and socio-medical expertise in the aftermath of WWII?

INTERNMENTS AFTER WORLD WAR I. THE CASE OF WOMEN FROM *VENEZIA GIULIA*

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In November 1918, in Venezia Giulia the Italian authorities arrested and interned in the inner part of Italy a number of Slovenes and Croats. After a systematic review of the many lists found in the sources of the Italian Ministry of the Interior (held by the Central State Archives in Rome – *Archivio Centrale dello Stato*) and of the new authorities in Venezia Giulia 1919–1922 (held by the State Archives in Trieste – *Archivio dello Stato di Trieste*) and a comparison with some other primary as well as secondary sources, I collected data showing that at least 850 civilians – which were for the most part Slovenes and Croats – were deported from the region (and some from parts of Dalmatia). Among them were some women about whom we know very little. For the first time, the paper will present the most relevant information about these interned women, whose history has been until now forgotten.

THE ANTIFASCISM OF SLOVENE WOMEN FROM VENEZIA GIULIA: MEMORY AND OBLIVION

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Slovene women's activities in organizations in the Littoral or within the boundaries of the newly founded Venezia Giulia flourished after the end of World War I. Women were active in national defence organizations, charities, cultural and professional societies, some also in the ranks of the social democrats. The end of the war, the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy, the introduction of the new Italian authorities prompted them to be more active, which is attested, *inter alia*, by the abundance of Slovene-language periodicals published in Trieste and Gorizia after 1918. *Ženski svet*, whose editorial office had to be transferred to Ljubljana in 1923 on account of the pressure exerted by the Italian authorities and the rise of fascism, deserves particular mention. The periodical was published in Ljubljana up to 1941. Women's activities in organizations after the war are yet to be properly examined. The same holds true also for anti-fascist activities of individual women, particularly those of educated women, also when subjected to the repressive fascist policy.

The article will focus particularly on Slovene women antifascists in the Littoral whom the fascist authorities identified as dangerous enemies of Mussolini's Italy. They were arrested, sent also to the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State, confined or interned and paid with their lives for their political and national activities, just as did their peers, brothers and husbands. However, despite their efforts they remained in the shadow of history, not due to lacking court records and other official documents, but rather on account of the androcentrically oriented memoiristics, which was occasionally shaped also by women themselves.

REPRESENTATION AND RESISTANCE: WOMEN AS LITERARY OBJECTS/SUBJECTS OF ANTIFASCIST LITERATURE

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Part of the anti-fascist movement was literature of resistance, which defined the ideological framework of the fight against fascism. Its role was not only artistic but also political. This raises the question of the role of women's characters in the particular literature. Did the female characters of antifascist literature differ from the representation of women, who prevailed in literature before the threat of fascism? How were women connected to violence: only as victims or were they also portrayed as perpetrators? To what extent were teachers, nurses, mothers and fighters typed and limited by their femininity? Were they only literary objects – or could they develop into full-blooded subjects? The focus of the research will be on the representation of women from the Northern Adriatic between 1921 and 1941.



