



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

International conference  
**ANTIFASCISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL AND  
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

online, 27–28 May 2021

**PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS**



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KOPER 2021

**International conference ANTIFASCISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL AND  
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Programme and Abstracts**

Editor: Mateja Režek

Technical Editor: Alenka Obid

Design and layout: Alenka Obid

Publisher: Science and Research Centre/Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Koper,  
Institute for Historical Studies/Inštitut za zgodovinske študije, Annales ZRS

For the publisher: Rado Pišot

Online edition, available on: [http://www.zrs-kp.si/index.php/research-2/zalozba/  
monografije/](http://www.zrs-kp.si/index.php/research-2/zalozba/monografije/)

The conference is organised within the framework of the research project *J6-9356 Antifascism in the Julian March in a Transnational Perspective, 1919–1954* and the research programme *P6-0272 Mediterranean and Slovenia*, co-financed by the Slovenian Research Agency.

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# FOREWORD

## ANTIFASCISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Antifascism as one of the core values on which the political identity of post-war Europe was built on was a frequent topic of academic research, while after 1989 this paradigm conspicuously withdrew into the background, prompting some historians to declare a “crisis of antifascism”. However, over the past decade, we have witnessed a renewed and growing interest in research into antifascism, particularly its political, social and cultural characteristics in different, though interconnected, European environments, highlighted with approaches of transnational history. The conference follows contemporary academic debates, as well as delves deeper into antifascism and examining the selected cases more in detail.

The conference examines the antifascist network of relationships from its very beginning after the First World War until the present. It is focused on transnational entanglements of antifascist movements, as well as on the formation of collective memories and the political uses of antifascism after the Second World War. One of the focuses is the role of antifascism in border regions, such as the former Julian March (*Venezia Giulia/Julijska krajina*), a multiethnic northern Adriatic region, where debates on fascism and antifascism still play a crucial role in present-day discussions on the history and memory of the region and its population.

Considering new sources and research perspectives, the goal of the conference is to launch a broad academic debate that provides novel insights into the following issues:

- 1) ideological, political, social and national premises of antifascism in different European environments;
- 2) different practices of antifascist engagement from theoretical, political, intelligence and artistic activities to organized armed resistance in a comparative perspective;

- 3) transnational interactions, cross-fertilizations, and cooperation of antifascist groups, organizations, parties, and individuals;
- 4) women's emancipation within the antifascist movement;
- 5) formation of collective memories of antifascism after the Second World War.

**ORGANISER:**

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies  
Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Koper, Inštitut za zgodovinske študije

**PROGRAMME COMMITTEE:**

Jože PIRJEVEC  
Egon PELIKAN  
Borut KLABJAN  
Mateja REŽEK

# PROGRAMME

## International Conference

### ANTIFASCISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

online, 27–28 May 2021

#### THURSDAY, 27<sup>th</sup> May

**9:10–9:15 (CEST)**

*Online meet-and-greet*

**9:15–9:30 (CEST)**

*Opening remarks*

Rado Pišot, Director of the Science and Research Centre

Egon Pelikan, Head of the Institute for Historical Studies

**9:30–11:00 (CEST)**

Chair: Mateja Režek (Science and Research Centre Koper)

**Jože Pirjevec** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Hate Speech in the Eastern Adriatic Area from Irredentism to Fascism*

**Vesna Mikolič** (Science and Research Centre Koper & University of Trieste): *The Discourse of the Slovenian Community in Italy in Response to Fascist Measures*

**Kasper Braskén** (Åbo Akademi University, Turku): *A Dire Warning to All Ethnic Minorities of Europe? Transnational Responses against Italian Fascism in the Swedish-Speaking Minority in Finland*

*Discussion*

**11:30–13:30 (CEST)**

Chair: Ana Cergol Paradiž (University of Ljubljana)

**Egon Pelikan** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Anti-fascism of Slovenian and Croatian Clergy in the Julian March during the Interwar Period – a View from the Vatican*

**Jesper Jørgensen** (The Workers' Museum & The Labor Movement's Library and Archive, Copenhagen): *Against Fascism and in Defense of the USSR: Transnational Anti-fascism in a Danish perspective 1933–1938*

**Marta Verginella** (University of Ljubljana): *Persevering on the Ramparts of the Nation. Anti-fascism of Educated Women, Feminists and Activists in the Littoral in the 1920s*

**Gorazd Bajc** (University of Maribor): *Were Women only a Support to Men, Who Acted against Italian Fascism? Women Engagement within the Anti-fascist Organization TIGR*

*Discussion*

**15:00–17:00 (CEST)**

Chair: Nancy Wingfield (Northern Illinois University)

**Michael Wedekind**: *Occupation Policies and Antifascism in the Alpine-Adriatic Region*

**Sabrina P. Ramet** (Norwegian University of Science and Technology & Science and Research Centre Koper): *The Anti-Fascism of Hans & Sophie Scholl: Intellectual Sources of the White Rose*

**Klaus Tragbar** (University of Innsbruck): *From the Bauhaus to Buchenwald and to Berlin. Anti-fascism and Career in the Life of Franz Ehrlich*

**Thomas Porena** (Humboldt University of Berlin): *Oskar Juranić. A Biography of an Anti-fascist "Traitor"*

*Discussion*

**FRIDAY, 28<sup>th</sup> May**

**10:00–12:00 (CEST)**

Chair: Milan Radošević (Institute for Historical and Social Sciences HAZU, Rijeka/Pula)

**Borut Klabjan** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Antifascism in Stone. Memory Activism and Slovene Antifascist Resistance in the 1930s*

**Bojan Godeša** (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana): *The Bazovica Partisan Brigade – a Symbolic Continuity between Pre-war Antifascist Tradition and Liberation Struggle in Slovenian Littoral*

**Stéfanie Prezioso** (University of Lausanne): *Antifascism in a Transnational Perspective: History, Memory and Public Use of Giustizia e Libertà and Partito d'Azione in post-World War II Italy*

**Pontus Järvstad** (University of Iceland): *Post-war Nordic Anti-fascist Organizing and International Solidarity*

*Discussion*

**13:00–15:00 (CEST)**

Chair: Vanni D'Alessio (University of Naples Federico II)

**Manuel Loff** (University of Porto & Institute of Contemporary History):  
*Antifascism vs. Anti-antifascism: the Portuguese and Spanish Debate*

**Božo Repe** (University of Ljubljana): *Shaping Collective Memory of Anti-Fascism after World War II in Slovenia and Its Revision*

**Vida Rožac Darovec** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Memory Practices in Slovenia through the Lens of Public Opinion*

**Hugo García** (Autonomous University of Madrid): *The Promises and Perils of New Antifascist Studies*

*Discussion*

**15:45–16:30 (CEST)**

Chair: Maura Hametz (James Madison University)

**Roger Griffin** (Oxford Brookes University): *The Instrumentalization of Antifascism by the Populist Right and the Far Left*

*Discussion*

# ABSTRACTS





## **HATE SPEECH IN THE EASTERN ADRIATIC AREA FROM IRREDENTISM TO FASCISM**

**Jože PIRJEVEC**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

From the second half of the 19th century onwards the coastal area of the eastern Adriatic was the stage of a fierce conflict between three autochthonous nationalities that competed among themselves for political power. Italians on one side, and Slavs (Slovenian and Croats) on the other. Italians, who for centuries had been the dominant nationality in the region due to historical and cultural reasons, saw the rise of the Slavs from their subjugated position as a mortal threat. They tried in every possible way to stop this awakening using, among other tactics, hate speech against their neighbors of rare intensity. The presence of the Austrian authorities who ruled the area, however, limited this violence to verbal and social discrimination. After WWI, the situation changed. Austria-Hungary collapsed and a great part of the area we are speaking about was annexed by a victorious Italy. In the new political atmosphere, intensely nationalist and soon fascist, hate speech against the Slavs continued as vigorously as in the past but with one significant change. Now it was encouraged by the authorities, which means that it degenerated into physical violence, to which the Slavs for their part reacted accordingly.

## THE DISCOURSE OF THE SLOVENIAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY IN RESPONSE TO FASCIST MEASURES

Vesna MIKOLIČ

*Science and Research Centre Koper & University of Trieste*

The paper will shed light on the socio-linguistic situation in Primorska region (Slovenian Littoral). Our focus will be on the analysis of how language and minority policies related to the whole Slovenian community in Italy at that time. In order to answer these questions, we will draw on various historical sources and literature, focusing specifically on the textual analysis of the newspaper *Edinost*, the most important Slovenian newspaper in Italy at the time, published from 1876 to 1928, with particular interest in the issues of the period after the First World War. Among other texts, *Edinost* also published the Slovenian translations of the speeches of Josip Vilfan, Slovenian lawyer from Trieste, who was elected member of Italian Parliament in 1921 and 1924. Based on the analysis of his speeches, we will try to find out how the representatives of the Slovenian community in the Italian parliament in the twenties coped with the then prevailing fascism. We are interested in Vilfan's ideas about the national question of the Slovenian minority and the Slovenian language use, as well as his own style of communication.

In addition, other areas of public life, from public administration, political and social life to the economy and the church, will also be examined to find out how the use of the mother tongue was respected as a fundamental human and minority right of the Slovenian community during the period in which three peaks were reached: the arson of the Slovenian National Hall in Trieste in 1920, the Gentile Reform of 1923, which completely suppressed the Slovenian (and Croatian) language from the schools of the Julia Region, and the fascist emergency laws of 1926, which banned all workers' and bourgeois-democratic parties and thwarted other organisations, including financial institutions and cooperatives, thus completely hindering or suppressing the public activity of the Slovenian community. An analysis of the use of the Slovenian language in all these public spheres and of some linguistic practises will show to what extent the Slovenian community yielded to these pressures and drastic laws, and to what extent it persisted in a national defensive attitude and formed an anti-fascist discourse.

## **A DIRE WARNING TO ALL ETHNIC MINORITIES OF EUROPE? TRANSNATIONAL RESPONSES AGAINST ITALIAN FASCISM IN THE SWEDISH-SPEAKING MINORITY IN FINLAND**

**Kasper BRASKÉN**

*Åbo Akademi University, Turku*

The aim of the paper is to discuss how ethnic minorities criticized the rise of the fascist dictatorship in Italy by approaching the problem from the perspective of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. By adding a transnational minority perspective to the study of anti-fascism, the paper will contribute with new perspectives on how anti-fascism was articulated for the protection of ethnic minorities in Europe. Like all ethnic minorities, they constitute a complex constellation of groups, identities and interests that intersected given class and ethnic boundaries. Although there among the conservative parts of the Swedish-speaking minority was much understanding for Mussolini's 'righteous' fight against communism in Italy, the increasing levels of terror, the decay of democratic rights, and the treatment of ethnic minorities in the Italian borderlands became pivotal issues that challenged the assessment of fascism among the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. Significantly, as domestic fascist sympathizers increased in number in Finland during the 1920s, the analysis of Italian fascism became in a pivotal way entangled with the domestic fight against fascism too.

The paper will utilize newspapers and journals from the 1920s, published in Swedish in Finland. The material emphasizes in many ways the relevance of applying a transnational approach to the history of anti-fascism. Firstly, it shows how the circulation of critical articles and facts about fascist terror in Italy became pivotal for the formation of an anti-fascist opinion in Finland. Secondly, it reveals how representatives of the Swedish-speaking minority were directly connected to transnational anti-fascist networks and initiatives in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and especially to the left movements in Sweden. The paper is produced within the research project "Finland-Swedish Anti-Fascism" at Abo Akademi University, Turku, Finland.

## **ANTI-FASCISM OF SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN CLERGY IN THE JULIAN MARCH DURING THE INTERWAR PERIOD – A VIEW FROM THE VATICAN**

**Egon PELIKAN**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

The paper presents the perception and evaluation on the part of the Vatican and Pius XI of the anti-fascist activity of Slovenian and Croatian clergy and of Christian Socials in the Julian March in the period between the two world wars.

During this period, the clergy of the Primorska region developed lively cultural anti-Fascist action within the Church in the Julian March, while the Vatican closely monitored the situation along the eastern Italian border. This fact is corroborated by the vast Vatican's archival material alone. Particularly interesting are visitations that were conducted in the Julian March by high-ranking papal legates, who came to the region and travelled around disguised as tourists, simple curiosity seekers, or "butterfly catchers," while in reality producing detailed reports about the status of Slovenians and Croats within the Church of the Julian March in the wake of the annexation of over half a million Slovenian and Croatian people to the Kingdom of Italy.

The paper presents (and compares) two such reports. One secret visitation report was written in August 1928 by Msgr. Gaetano Malchiodi, who conducted the visitation in June and July 1928. As stated in the report, the order for the visitation came directly from Pius XI. The report was submitted to the Secretariat of State under the title "Report on a Secret Visitation of the Dioceses of Trieste, Parenzo and Pola, Fiume and Zara, in View of the Status of the Local Slavs." It consists of over 50 pages of meticulous review of the status of Slovenians and Croats in the Julian March in the summer of 1928.

The other visitation report is titled "Report on an Apostolic Visitation in the Julian March" and was drawn up for Pius XI by Msgr. Luca Pasetto. Pasetto stayed in the Julian March from 28 December 1930 to 22 March 1931. This report, too, comprises just over 50 pages.

Both apostolic visitors carefully inspected the area along the eastern Italian border, travelling in rented cars under the guise of tourists on vacation, meeting both with the common people of the region – e.g., casually in pubs – and members of the entire church hierarchy, from lower-level clergy to the bishops of the Julian March.

In the comparison between the contents of the two visitations, the timing is of key significance, for in the period of less than three years that separates the two reports the concordat between the Holy See and Fascist Italy took place, establishing the attitude of the Vatican towards anti-fascism of Slovenian and Croatian clergy in the Julian March in an entirely different context.

Suddenly, the Slovenian and Croatian clergy were considered the “troublemakers” in the relationship between the Church and the regime in the territories along the sensitive eastern Italian border.

It is clear that the visitations had important direct consequences for the “Realpolitik” of the Vatican in the Julian March – more important than it has been assumed until now.

## **AGAINST FASCISM AND IN DEFENSE OF THE USSR: TRANSNATIONAL ANTI-FASCISM IN A DANISH PERSPECTIVE 1933-1938**

**Jesper JØRGENSEN**

*The Workers' Museum & The Labor Movement's Library and Archive,  
Copenhagen*

The Achilles heel of anti-fascism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was the Soviet Russian connection. The concept of anti-fascism was enormously potent as a mobilizing framework and at the same time fragile. In the 1930s, communist party members and sympathizers were the main players in the field of anti-fascism. But the persistent objective of the communists to also defend the Soviet Union as the keeper of the 'great October socialist revolution' constantly jeopardized the fight against fascism.

The transnational aspect was an integrated element in the communist movement. There was a constant flow of ideas, directives, resources, goods, and persons between communist hotspots around the world. Likewise, the most contentious and militant anti-fascist campaigns and activities bare the footprint of this network. Campaigns like the "Boycott the Nazi Flag" in 1933 and underground activities like ship sabotage, and arms smuggling and recruitment of volunteers for the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War had truly local and national grounding but were initially initiated and financed from the center of the communist movement in Moscow.

On the back of recent years' historical research, the paper sketches out the history of transnational anti-fascism in a Danish perspective. The period is delimited by the Nazi takeover in Germany in 1933 and the temporary end of communist anti-fascism with the withdrawal from Spain and the Soviet commenced approximation to Nazi-Germany in 1938. The paper will focus on activities, like the above mentioned, with clear transnational character. Not to neglect more popular activities like solidarity demonstrations in the streets of Copenhagen, involving a more diverse segment of actors, motives, and hopes for a better future, it will also discuss the dark legacy of transnational anti-fascism, and maybe closing in on the question of why the concept is challenged even today.

**PERSEVERING ON THE RAMPARTS OF THE NATION: ANTI-FASCISM OF EDUCATED WOMEN, FEMINISTS AND ACTIVISTS IN THE LITTORAL IN THE 1920S**

**Marta VERGINELLA**  
*University of Ljubljana*

The paper sheds light on the beginnings of Slovene women's anti-fascism in the Julian March and their addressing of either the woman question or the national question. It focuses on the most politically active women, particularly teachers, analysing their response to the rise of the fascist party and ideology, as well as the to the institutionalization of fascism in the Julian March. The paper explores to what extent women's anti-fascism followed "men's" anti-fascism and to what degree it adopted and transformed patterns and values imposed by fascism or refuted them under the influence of liberal, socialist and communist ideas. The analysis is based primarily on the press, particularly on the journal of the Littoral teachers' association *Učiteljski list* and the periodical *Ženski svet*, which were published in Trieste in the 1920s; additionally, it rests upon autobiographical materials and memoirs. One of the central questions in this paper is to what extent the operation of Slovene feminists and women active in the Slovene public can be understood as national defence and to what extent as anti-fascist activities.

## **WERE WOMEN ONLY A SUPPORT TO MEN, WHO ACTED AGAINST ITALIAN FASCISM? WOMEN ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE SECRET ANTI-FASCIST ORGANIZATION TIGR**

**Gorazd BAJC**

*University of Maribor*

Slovenes (and Croats) resisted in various ways against Italian fascism in Venezia Giulia (Primorska and Istria), which was borderland between Italy and Yugoslavia. There is a lot of literature about the resistance, but only a few information deals with the role of women, who were members of anti-fascist movement. There are several reasons for this, primarily male-centric view of the historiography.

The paper will present the results of the so far research of women role in anti-fascist movement in the period between the two world wars, especially their engagement within the secret organization TIGR (acronym for Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, Rijeka/Fiume). Women participated not only in the form of general assistance to the leading members of the organization and in propaganda. Some women also carried out extremely risky tasks, such as transmitting confidential information or gathering intelligence about Italian facilities. Italian secret intelligence and security services and police authorities closely monitored women, who lived in Venezia Giulia. Considerable number of them were arrested. The paper will also show the quantification of arrested women: some cases are not well known, and some are unknown at all. The study of the secret TIGR organization and thus the activities of women within it is difficult because there are almost no primary sources of the organization. Therefore, the documents of the Italian authorities (especially the material of the special court, *Tribunale Speciale per la Difesa dello Stato*) remain most important for studying TIGR. For the purposes of the paper, the documents kept by the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia, the Department of History and Ethnology of the Slovene National and Study Library in Trieste, The National Archives (Kew-London), personal collections (especially the one of Ivan Rudolf, which is kept by the Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana) and memorial testimonies were also analysed. Were women only a support to men, who acted against Italian fascism? That is our basic research question.



## **OCCUPATION POLICIES AND ANTIFASCISM IN THE ALPINE-ADRIATIC REGION**

**Michael WEDEKIND**

The paper intends to sketch out the premisses and the historical framework within which occupation policies and antifascism unfolded in the Alpine-Adriatic region during the Second World War. In particular, it will focus on the paradigm of Italian and German expansion and population policy by mainly adopting a bottom-down perspective on its theoretical foundations and implementation, as well as on the concrete impact and consequences it had for regional antifascism. The paper will also look at Italian and German techniques of organising collaboration and oppression.

The presentation will first analyse the consequences of border and regime changes in the aftermath of the First World War and of socio-ethnic interventions carried out by the Fascist regime during the 1920s and 1930s in order to bring about a socio-ethnic reorganization of the area. It will shed light on ideological backgrounds and strategies of Italian ethnopolitics, as well as on the role and interests of policy makers, policy advisors, technocrats, scholars and institutions involved.

In a second step, the paper examines Fascist and Nazi occupation policies in occupied nowadays Slovenia and Croatia. It will especially analyse the much more ideologically rooted German policy which pursued a combination of nationalistic and National Socialist objectives—goals that (partly inspired by revisionism, partly by local revanchism) can be regarded as a pointed imperialist derivative of expansive pre-1918 Austrian borderland designs, now aiming at a general socio-ethnic reorganization. These ambitions resulted in the aggressive Germanization of the Slovene population and in acts of genocide—measures that are clear evidence of the fact that occupation in Slovenia was an integral part of the Nazi reorganization of Europe. The paper will compare the German occupation policy with Italian interventions and measures carried out in the Province of Ljubljana, stating that after all the Fascist rule was as harsh as Nazi occupation. Special attention will be paid to the field of cultural policy in both areas of occupation.

Thirdly, the paper will examine Nazi rule over the Julian March from 1943. The expansion to Trieste and the Adriatic Sea was more than a military strategy. It was part of a greater design of German political and economic imperialism in Southeast Europe and of strengthening German hegemony on the continent. German rule in the Adriatic Littoral was to be legitimized by a conglomerate of geopolitical and economic, historic, ethnic, and political reasons, while for the different regions and nationality groups new specific identities were to be designed. German policy supported centrifugal aspirations in the region, followed a strategy of “ethnic segmentation,” but also of ethnic antagonism. The ethnic complexity was to minimize the legitimacy of Italian supremacy, additionally called into question by affirming the complete failure of Fascist minority policy. Within this context, the paper will finally analyse forms, ideology, strategies, and effectiveness of Nazi oppression and persecution of both ideologic and “racial” enemies. It will highlight the high degree of its aggressiveness, informed by the former employment of much of the German forces in Eastern Europe, as well as the reactions of the armed resistance movement operating in the Adriatic Littoral.

The paper is meant to give a general overview and therefore touches upon a broad variety of topics.

## **THE ANTI-FASCISM OF HANS & SOPHIE SCHOLL: INTELLECTUAL SOURCES OF THE WHITE ROSE**

**Sabrina P. RAMET**

*Norwegian University of Science and Technology &  
Science and Research Centre Koper*

During 1942 and 1943, at the height of the Second World War, Hans and Sophie Scholl, Alexander Schmorell, and other young Germans collaborated in the composition and distribution of five anti-Nazi leaflets, risking their lives and ultimately paying with their lives for their courage. Calling themselves 'the White Rose', they read widely in philosophy and literature. They were influenced by their reading, above all by the writings of St Augustine of Hippo, St. Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal, and John Henry Newman. These writings reinforced the group's commitment to the moral law, their conviction of the necessity to fight Nazism, and their belief that nonviolent resistance was the appropriate means to combat evil. A brief review of the other opposition groups meeting in the Third Reich show that the group's philosophical grounding, focus on informing the German public and arousing it to action, and commitment to nonviolence mark it as unique among the antifascist groups and conspiracies of the Third Reich.

## **FROM THE BAUHAUS TO BUCHENWALD AND TO BERLIN: ANTI-FASCISM AND CAREER IN THE LIFE OF FRANZ EHRlich**

**Klaus TRAGBAR**  
*University of Innsbruck*

Franz Josef Ehrlich was one of the most distinguished architects of the GDR, a convinced communist and anti-fascist. He joined the Socialist Workers' Youth as an apprentice, studied at the Bauhaus in the phase influenced by Hannes Meyer, in which scientifically based teaching and cooperation with industry were in the foreground, and joined the KPD in 1930, after receiving his diploma. In 1934 he was arrested as the editor of an illegal communist magazine and imprisoned first in the Zwickau penitentiary, then in the Buchenwald concentration camp. In the construction office there he designed, among other things, representative villas and residential buildings, a casino and other buildings for the concentration camp and the associated settlements for the SS; all in the nationalist architectural language of the Nazi regime. Together with other communists, he organised the camp resistance. After the Second World War, he participated in the reconstruction of Dresden and Berlin, and designed and realised numerous public buildings and furniture programmes. As an antifascist and victim of National Socialism, he was one of the role models of the still young GDR, but in the context of the Formalism Controversy at the beginning of the 1950s, as a former Bauhaus student, he came under fierce attack. In 1954, he was recruited by the State Secretariat for State Security as a secret informant and also used this activity to further his career. Ehrlich died in Bernburg (Saale) in 1984. The paper traces the biography of Franz Ehrlich and discusses his anti-fascist stance in relation to his work as an architect at the Bauhaus, in the Buchenwald concentration camp and in Berlin after the end of the Second World War.

## OSKAR JURANIĆ: A BIOGRAPHY OF AN ANTI-FASCIST “TRAITOR”

**Thomas PORENA**

*Humboldt University of Berlin*

The paper will focus on the life of Oskar Juranić (Rijeka/Fiume 1909 – unknown 1948). Several reasons supported the decision to treat his biography as a separate entity. In first instance his life summarises the crucial aspects of the European history of the first half of the 20th Century. As an anti-Italian anti-fascist, Croatian communist, fighter in international brigades in Spain, concentration camp inmate in France and Germany, responsible for disciplinary matters in the International Committee Dachau after the camp liberation, Deputy Foreign Minister of the FNRJ, Juranić was finally executed as a traitor of the country in the so called “Dachau trial” in Ljubljana in 1948.

The narration is based on a critical analysis of the political career that Oskar Juranić sent as a document to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia on 3 July 1945 in order to apply for a post in the diplomatic service of Yugoslavia. To this very dry and brief biography, in which Juranić listed a few selected political deeds, I incorporate further biographical information that Juranić wrote down in the personnel questionnaire of the International Brigades in Spain. To present a more comprehensive picture of Juranić, the reports of the Yugoslav court of Ogulin, the Italian police reports of Fiume and Rome, the opinions of the Comintern on his activities in Spain and the letters in Italian and Croatian that Juranić sent to the family from 1937 to 1947 are incorporated into the narration. A critical anti-communist novel about Juranić was also published in Argentina after the Dachau trials: *Bit čete kao bogovi* by Antun Bonifačić (1950). Through a biographical approach enriched with a brighter corpus of literature, my aim is to spot on the diverse antifascist networks Europe-wide (Yugoslavia, Spain, France, Germany) Juranić was related to, on his functions in those networks, and to focus on the switching position between his clear patriotic anti-fascism in the youth onto a patriotic communist anti-fascism (in between of the Dimitrov social fascism and the People’s Front position), onto the discrimination against returned concentration camps anti-fascists inmates in Yugoslavia 1945 and onto the political changes in 1948 in Yugoslavia which de facto sentenced Juranić to death.

**ANTIFASCISM IN STONE:  
MEMORY ACTIVISM AND SLOVENE ANTIFASCIST RESISTANCE IN  
THE 1930S**

**Borut KLABJAN**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

After the First World War and the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy the former Austrian Littoral was annexed by the Kingdom of Italy. Despite a rapprochement was reached with neighboring Yugoslavia at the diplomatic level, tensions continued to characterize the interwar years in the area. A harsh ethnic policy directed against Slovenes and Croats inhabiting the eastern half of the region, renamed Venezia Giulia, was implemented after Fascists seized power in Italy. Acts of violence against ethnic and political enemies became Fascist State violence and it provoked organized forms of antifascism among Slovenes and Croats in the region. The historiography has termed it as the first antifascism in Europe. This intense antifascist activism was followed by strict measures which included internments and death sentences. When four antifascists were sentenced to death in 1930, a group of Slovene emigres built in the city of Kranj what one of them later called the “first antifascist monument in the World”.

Based on his memoirs and archival material, this paper aims at exploring the interplay between memory activism and antifascist resistance. It shows how this social activism connected in multiple ways national identity, international cooperation and transnational solidarity.

## **THE BAZOVICA PARTISAN BRIGADE – A SYMBOLIC CONTINUITY BETWEEN PRE-WAR ANTIFASCIST TRADITION AND LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN SLOVENIAN LITTORAL**

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The contribution analyses the efforts of the leadership of the Slovenian resistance movement to ensure the association of the pre-war anti-fascist tradition in the Slovenian Littoral region with the wartime armed resistance as the continuation of the pre-war aspirations of this region's population. In this context, celebrating the memory of men convicted during the First Trieste Process and executed in the meadow near Bazovica (Basovizza) represented one of the crucial elements. Bazovica was integrated into the national liberation narrative as a symbol – a turning point in the tradition of the pre-war resistance against the fascist regime in the Littoral region and a forerunner of the new forms of resistance, i.e. the beginning of the armed resistance. During World War II, the Liberation Front transformed this tradition into a mass national movement encompassing the entire Slovenian Littoral region. The national liberation struggle was presented as a result of the 25-year tradition of resistance in the Slovenian Littoral as well as the unity regarding the goals integrated into its programme – the annexation of the Littoral region to Slovenia as the realisation of the second basic point of the Liberation Front, stating that “this action (the armed resistance) shall represent the basis for the unification of all Slovenians”.

**ANTIFASCISM IN A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: HISTORY,  
MEMORY AND PUBLIC USE OF *GIUSTIZIA E LIBERTÀ* AND *PARTITO  
D'AZIONE* IN POST-WORLD WAR II ITALY**

**Stéfanie PREZIOSO**  
*University of Lausanne*

The hegemony won by the Italian right imposed a falsifying re-reading of the antifascisms of the interwar period, all the more virulent because, like the „values of the Resistance“ in France, „antifascism“ had served as a convenient unifying referent for the entire political field since the Second World War. One of the major operations consists in depoliticising anti-fascism by circumscribing it to a definitively closed historical period.

Indeed, the virulence with which anti-fascism has been blacklisted is proportional to the fear that „nostalgia for the past“ will lead to „revolutionary criticism of the present“ In fact, the values to which anti-fascism is attached, as a homogeneous political culture, refer on the one hand to the study of the causes of democratic failure and on the other hand to the will to find political, cultural, social and economic answers so that a true democracy can be established. It is not, therefore, simply a question of a negative positioning based on a specific phenomenon - Fascism - and on a period closed in on itself (Benedetto Croce's famous ‚parenthesis‘); a convenient reading which allowed the legitimisation of a ‚soft‘ ‚democratic transition‘ and which, at the same time, ratified the devaluation of the desire for radical transformations carried by parties such as the Party of Action. It is rather a question of envisaging anti-fascism as a constant process. For a consistent fringe of organised anti-fascism had been determined not to fight a conjunctural battle: the understanding of the causes of fascism's rise to power was to pave the way for the construction of a new political order. The „Giustizia e Libertà“ (GL) movement and the Partito d'Azione, which I will focus on here, did not intend to fight a conjunctural battle but to “work for eternity!”



## POST-WAR NORDIC ANTI-FASCIST ORGANIZING AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

**Pontus JÄRVSTAD**

*University of Iceland*

In 1959–1960, a string of anti-Semitic attacks occurred in West Germany. What began as a Soviet intelligence operation to discredit and delegitimize the Federal Republic of Germany soon took on a life of its own. “The Swastika Epidemic” saw anti-Semitic messages and Nazi symbols sprayed on synagogues and homes of Jews around the world. Questions soon aroused whether the revival of Nazism was still a danger. An American Rabbi claimed that the instigator of the affair was the Swedish fascist Per Engdahl, whose fascist group and other Nazi groups were on the ascendancy in Sweden. These developments were well covered in the media and led to public outrage. In 1963, an anti-fascist committee was formed by public figures and activists, predominantly from the left, but also among priests and liberals. The committee was named *Kommittén mot nynazism och rasfördomar* (Committee against Neo-Nazism and Racial Prejudice). Its focus soon shifted towards forging broader anti-fascist international solidarities, with similar committees being formed in the other Nordic countries. Thus, they began to provide assistance to the victims of the authoritarian regimes in Spain, Portugal, Greece and beyond.

These Nordic anti-fascist committees cooperated by organizing conferences and other exchanges to promote their cause. They shared lists of political prisoners and inspired each other in their work. One such case was the “Spanish week” in 1963, a Spanish propaganda offensive in the Nordic countries, which these groups managed to shut down. Another example was the attempt to disrupt the NATO ministerial meeting in Reykjavik 1968. In the paper, I explore how the different committees engaged with civil society, the labor movement, politicians and the media. I discuss how a heritage of anti-fascism was claimed by these committees and how they grappled with the question of using the concept in another temporal context. I show that the process of defining who was a fascist – within the specific framework of the Cold War – was rife with tension and conflict, as has been the case in the history of anti-fascism in general.

## ANTIFASCISM VS. ANTI-ANTIFASCISM: THE PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH DEBATE

**Manuel LOFF**

*University of Porto & Institute of Contemporary History*

In the early 1990s, under the illusion of an *End of History*, it appeared that “in most societies, this ‘Second World War which never ended’ has come to its conclusion. In a process which became apparent in Italy from the middle of the 1970s, the Second World War, in many parts of the world, has lost the overwhelming ethical force which it once possessed”, in reference to “the ethical values of anti-Fascism, the Resistance and the People’s War” (Bosworth, 1993: 3-4). This assessment, widely shared until recently, should be revised under the political circumstances of the 2010s and early 2020s, as memory of fascism is inevitably re-emerging not only in political debate, but as a political drive, as it already happened in the 1970s as a reaction to the *New Right’s* revisionism/negationism. *Anti-antifascist* historiography conveying the “simple syllogism” of antifascism = communism > communism = totalitarianism > antifascism = totalitarianism (Traverso, 2016: 328), and historical/media accounts equalising nazi-fascist genocidal violence and the Resistance’s becoming commonplace, propelled antifascist reaction. In fact, since the very end of the war there have been openly political disputes over the German *Heimatvertriebene*, the Italian *Foibe*, antifascist purges in France or Italy.

Since 1999, Spanish mainstream political elites have been powerless to stop a massive social movement for the “recovery of historical memory” of Francoist repression, especially of Republican 120,000 *desaparecidos* killed during the war behind the frontline. In Portugal, a transitional process towards democracy in the 1970s, through a political as well as social revolution, soon led to a belligerent dispute of collective memory narratives on Salazar’s authoritarian regime designed during the age of Fascism, while more recently clashes over the past are focused on the 1961–1974 Colonial War and Portuguese coloniality as such.

Portuguese and Spanish cases are two good examples on how very different democratic transitional processes may produce the same sort of bellige-

rance against the antifascist core values on which post-1945 democracy was built on, providing evidence on how this is an epochal phenomenon. General condemnation of Salazar's and Franco's dictatorships, as it happened with every other fascist regime of the interwar and WWII, was (and still is) based on anti-fascism as a political culture whose capacity for securing wide consensus seems nevertheless to be lost somewhere in the 1980s, with neo-liberalism consolidating, and aggravated since the turn of the century with the new upsurge of the extreme-right and neo-fascism. Instead of suppressing antifascism it is helping it to recover its politically aggregating role.

## SHAPING COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF ANTI-FASCISM AFTER WORLD WAR II IN SLOVENIA AND ITS REVISION

**Božo REPE**

*University of Ljubljana*

Slovenes were among the first in Europe to experience Fascism; firstly, those who came under Italy after World War I, followed by Carinthian Slovenes after the Anschluss of 1938 and, lastly, all of Slovenia during the German, Italian and Hungarian Nazi-Fascist occupation at the time of World War II (a smaller portion of the territory was seized by the Ustasha Independent State of Croatia which practised similar ethnocidal and genocidal methods on the population as did the other occupying countries). The Slovene resistance against Fascism and Nazism was carried out within the Yugoslav resistance movement, although with military independence until the end of the war and throughout the Slovene national territory, regardless of the pre-war borders. The foundation for the second or “AVNOJ” Yugoslavia (named after the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia, which restored Yugoslavia on federal grounds in 1943 at a session in the Bosnian town of Jajce) was the National Liberation Struggle and the simultaneous revolution. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in 1952) enforced its authority on those grounds. The political leadership that governed Yugoslavia emerged from the National Liberation Struggle and it was not until Tito’s death in 1980 that it gradually began to be replaced by a new, younger generation. The main slogan of post-war Yugoslavia, which originated in the National Liberation Struggle, was “brotherhood and unity”. The frequent mythological portrayals of anti-Fascism and the resistance during World War II were especially typical of the arts: sculpture, painting, film, literature, poetry and others. Historiography was more objective, though still biased regarding certain topics (e.g. the issue of the civil war and collaborationism), while many topics were not to be discussed.

That changed after the death of the Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980. In the Eighties the discussion of World War II (and of the shared past of Yugoslav nations) became almost purely political. The political elites in individual republics attempted to consolidate their position and their vision of the reorganization of Yugoslav society through a valuation of World War II

(and of history in general). Everything connected with World War II and all that constituted anti-Fascism at the collective level (works of art, memoirs, feuilletonism or the history of education and of science) became a subject of controversy through which the grounds for the Yugoslav wars of the Nineties were systematically prepared. Nationalism became the greatest value among Yugoslav nations, while in the “newly composed” history – in which the nations accused one another of crimes and genocide, perceiving themselves as innocent victims – their common fight against Fascism became unsettling.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the process of the revision of history – and through that of anti-Fascism – continued to escalate, all the way to the deliberate destruction of monuments dedicated to the anti-Fascist struggle (Croatia led the way with almost 3000 monuments destroyed). In Slovenia anti-Fascism was likewise no longer considered a value; instead, it was denied and equated with Communism, especially by right-wing politics. Only a small extent of the revision of anti-Fascism stemmed from the new discoveries and findings of Slovene and European historiography; most of it stemmed from the changed geostrategic relations across the world and Europe (especially after the formation of the EU and the entry of new member countries from Eastern Europe, which brought along their own traumas, including the rehabilitation of collaborationism and the equating of Nazism with Communism, the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes with Stalinist crimes) and from the Slovene right-wing ideology, which clung to the “European” one and attempted to equate Slovenia with Eastern European countries.

## MEMORY PRACTICES IN SLOVENIA THROUGH THE LENS OF PUBLIC OPINION

**Vida ROŽAC DAROVEC**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

The paper presents the results of a telephone poll about commemoration in Slovenia (conducted by the Science and Research Centre Koper in 2018). The results of the poll show that the majority of respondents find commemorative ceremonies important, seeing them as promoting patriotism, identity, and culture, and helping preserve historical awareness. While the public discourse in former socialist countries has rehabilitated or even given precedence to silenced memories of the new elites, we find that the Slovenian cultural landscape of memory has not drastically changed. The efforts of the right-wing politics to revise history, which, in their view, has largely withheld the truth about the crimes of the communists and was ideology-tinted, have not penetrated the memory practices of ordinary people. Right-wing politicians are critical of the instances of celebrating anti-Fascist partisan resistance in the National Liberation Struggle (NOB), justifying their stance with the crimes perpetrated by the leader of this movement, the Communist Party, which used the NOB to seize power. Left-wing politicians, on the other hand, argue that the anti-Fascist struggle represents the foundations of Western Europe and that partisan resistance saved the nation from the certain demise that Nazi-Fascist domination would have brought about. Left-wing views are also reflected in the views of the respondents. Based on the results of the survey we can conclude that more than 50 percent of those polled do not attend state commemorations and are quite indifferent to the past. Those who do attend them give considerably higher priority to commemorative ceremonies dedicated to the NOB over those commemorating the independence of Slovenia. What they see as places of memory are WWII battlefields (e.g., Dražgoše), which they would visit as children during the times of socialism. Only a small percentage of respondents attend commemorations of Slovenia's independence or post-war mass killings. We find that respondents of left- and centre-orientated ideological persuasion attend commemorative ceremonies more frequently and are better organised than respondents of right-wing political affiliation. The ZZB NOB veterans' organisation is very

much involved in these ceremonies and responsive to media developments related to recent history, where conflicts of memories often occur. It should be emphasised, however, that the vast majority of respondents do not wish for the past to be exploited for political purposes, thereby dividing the nation.

## THE PROMISES AND PERILS OF NEW ANTIFASCIST STUDIES

**Hugo GARCÍA**

*Autonomous University of Madrid*

The scholarly study of antifascism has developed at high speed and in exciting new directions over the last decade. Comparative and transnational approaches have shown the plurality and global reach of a movement once thought to be confined to the European left, while exploring its complex entanglements with parallel struggles such as anticolonialism and feminism. Culture and memory studies have continued to attest to its long-lasting social impact, just as a variety of *Antifa* groups reacted to perceived attempts by the new far right to bring fascist ideas and techniques back into the mainstream. This presentation tries to assess the contribution of recent literature on antifascism to our understanding of contemporary politics, while reflecting on the perils that attend any subdiscipline in the process of institutionalization.



## **THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF ANTIFASCISM BY THE POPULIST RIGHT AND THE FAR LEFT**

**Roger GRIFFIN**

*Oxford Brookes University*

The lecture seeks to establish that the contemporary US Antifa movement and its European equivalents originated in the Anarchist, Communist and Social Democratic assaults on fascism in the interwar period as an integral part of their struggle to overthrow or humanize capitalism. It emphasizes how radical elements within the far left have always instrumentalized anti-fascism in order to pursue their own revolutionary agenda, and that anarchist groups in the US and elsewhere are still pursuing their own form of anti-democratic agitation by focusing on the dangers of right-wing populism. The ideology of the Soviet Union and DDR drew extensively on this tradition. More recently, the link between the far left and anti-fascism has played into the hands of right-wing populist leaders such as Trump and Orban seeking to fuel conspiracy theories about the threat posed by anarchy and the militant far left. The talk then considers the genealogy of liberal democratic resistance to fascism using a far more restricted concept of fascism which denies its capitalist paternity and is blind to the links between fascism and capitalism, but allowed it to fight fascism in the Second World War. It concludes with an appeal to apply more rigorous distinctions between fascism and radical right and right-wing populism in academic and public discourse which would dispel the semantic fog which exists around 'the right' in many post-war minds and allow the true enemies of liberal democracy and humanistic values to be identified not in fascism but in illiberal democracy.





