

INTERNMENTS AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR. THE CASE
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ABSTRACT

In November 1918, at the end of World War I, the new Italian authorities arrested several persons in the territory of Venezia Giulia, Rijeka (Fiume) and some parts of Dalmatia and interned some of them in the interior of Italy. A detailed examination of many documents and lists that are kept in Roman and Trieste archives reveal that around 850 civilians were interned, including women. Internments after the First World War in the Slovenian/Croatian-Italian contact area have still not received in-depth analysis; however, even less is known about the internment of women.

Keywords: Venezia Giulia, Rijeka, Istria, Dalmatia, Italy, women, teachers, internments, violence, transition

INTERNAMENTI DOPO LA PRIMA GUERRA MONDIALE. IL CASO DELLE
DONNE NELL'ALTO ADRIATICO, 1918–1920

SINTESI

Nel novembre del 1918, alla fine della Prima Guerra Mondiale, le nuove autorità italiane arrestarono diverse persone nel territorio della Venezia Giulia, a Fiume (Rijeka) ed in alcune parti della Dalmazia e ne internarono alcune nell'entroterra italiano. L'esame dettagliato di molti documenti ed elenchi che sono conservati negli archivi di Roma e Trieste rivelano che furono internati circa 850 civili, incluse donne. Gli internamenti dopo la Prima Guerra Mondiale nell'area di confine tra Slovenia, Croazia ed Italia non sono stati ancora analizzati in maniera puntuale, ed ancor meno si conosce riguardo agli internamenti di donne.

Parole chiave: Venezia Giulia, Fiume, Istria, Dalmazia, Italia, donne, maestre, internamenti, violenza, transizione

INTRODUCTION¹

During the first stage of a problematic and traumatic transition at the end of World War I, the new Italian authorities arrested several people in Venezia Giulia, in the areas of Trieste and Gorizia, in the eastern part of the Udine area, in Istria, in Rijeka (Fiume) and in parts of Dalmatia (in what could be referred to as the area of Northern Adriatic) and interned some of them in the Italian interior. For a long time, this chapter of history received little scholarly attention and was even less known to the public.

A few years ago, I started analyzing the many lists of these internees and other related documents in a systematic way. The lists are kept in the central archives of the Italian Interior Ministry in Rome. I compared the lists with other sources and the literature; however, internments are referred to only in passing. Exceptions include works by Lavo Čermelj (1965), Milica Kacin Wohinz (1972) and Angelo Visintin (2000), which comprise the most relevant and still useful data, given the rich literature about the military occupation and violent interventions at the end of World War One (e.g., Visintin, 2012, 457–458). I found that around 850 civilians underwent internment from the area, although some contemporary sources provide lower and at the same time varying numbers. I published the main findings in 2012, emphasizing that the topic called for a more thorough examination (Bajc, 2012).

Among other things, the lists show that internees included women. Internments after the First World War in the Slovenian/Croatian-Italian contact area have still not received in-depth analysis; however, even less is known about the internment of women. The present article will focus on the question of interned women in the period between the end of the war and the time of drastic changes by the end of 1920. It was then that a demarcation was made between Italy and the new Yugoslav state, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS), ending the problem of post-war internments.

In addition to the materials from Rome, the archives of the new occupying authorities in Venezia Giulia were examined; these are kept by the Trieste branch of the state archives. The documents included extensive files of the Governor and Civil Commissioner for Venezia Julia, who represented the top tier authority in the “new provinces”. In Rome, more lists of names are available, while Trieste keeps more documents about individuals who were arrested and interned. Documents in the two archives, in Rome and Trieste, thus are complementary.

My initial hypothesis was simple: the dynamics of female internment did not differ considerably from that of men.

1 The article was elaborated within the EIRENE project (full title: Post-war transitions in gendered perspective: the case of the North-Eastern Adriatic Region), founded by the European Research Council under Horizon 2020 financed Advanced Grant founding scheme [ERC Grant Agreement n. 742683]. The article is also the result of research activities in the following projects and research programs: *Preteklost severovzhodne Slovenije med srednjo Evropo in evropskim jugovzhodom* n. P6-0138, *Oborožena meja. Politično nasilje v severnem Jadranu, 1914–1941* n. J6-7152, and *Antifašizem v Juljski krajini v transnacionalni perspektivi, 1919–1954* n. J6-9356, financed by the Slovenian Research Agency ARRS (Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije).

THE CONTEXT OF POSTWAR VIOLENCE

Several types of violence appeared in the initial years of World War I, when civilians were caught in the new circumstances and a difficult situation. Some less familiar stories have received considerable attention in recent years (e.g., Bianchi, 2006; Ermacora, 2007). This also applies to the individual areas of the Northern Adriatic, which were filled with refugees, migrants and internees because of suspicion, preventive measures etc. (see Malni, 1998; Cecotti, 2001; Trogrlić, 2011; Mandić, 2013; Purini, 2010; Purini, 2015), including particular information about the situation of women in this area. These women suffered hunger, forced labor, along with physical and psychological suffering (e.g., Ermacora, 2014; Ermacora, 2016). After the war, some types of violence continued and took place within a new political framework in the Northern Adriatic because of incomplete demarcation between Italy and the new Yugoslav state.

The aspirations to appropriate the Adriatic and primarily Trieste were exhibited by many even before World War I (e.g., Vivante, 1954; Pirjevec, 2007, 19–65; Monzali, 2004; Monzali, 2015, 48–84; Cataruzza, 2007, 15–68; Klabjan, 2011; Čok, 2017; Ivašković, 2017). During World War I, territorial aspirations continued and so did the antagonism between the Italian and the “Slavic” sides, culminating towards the end of the war. When Austria-Hungary disintegrated, a concrete opportunity for a new delimitation appeared in the territory of Venezia Giulia, Rijeka and Dalmatia. Italy enjoyed considerable advantage over the Slovenians and Croats because it had its forces on the ground, and the Allies had made secret promises to it during the war, so its units occupied the “disputed territories” without problems. However, the new Yugoslav state that was formed in the meantime partly thwarted Rome’s plans. The peace conference in Paris complicated the situation further: the two sides failed to reach an agreement because neither wanted to give in. The question of the future affiliation of the Northern Adriatic thus turned into a complicated international problem.

The border and geopolitical dispute in turn affected the local situation, which resulted in several violent incidents. However, this is not the only way to interpret the main subject of this study. At the end of the war, the level of “local” opposition among Italians, on the one hand, and Slovenians and Croats, on the other, increased considerably. As the latest studies have confirmed (e.g., Toncich, 2017; Verginella, 2016; Žitko, 2015; Žitko, 2016; Klabjan, 2018), anti-Slavic sentiment, which began to develop in the second half of the 19th century was mostly reflected in public discourse (including prejudice and underestimation of the “other”); after November 1918, it experienced a “leap in quality” and grew even stronger with the rise of fascism (1922).

On the one hand, the new occupation authorities promised Slovenians and Croats that they would respect their tradition and culture to the highest extent possible in November 1918 (e.g. Čermelj, 1965, 25); on the other, military command acted rigorously against all forms of public promotion of “Slavic sentiment” and strongly supported manifestations of Italian spirit. The new authorities also began to remove “dangerous” Slovenian and Croatian civilians. The main target was the intellectuals: priests, teachers, lawyers, doctors, politicians, mayors and state officials, as well as some railway workers and former

gendarmes. Mere suspicion was sufficient for Slovenians and Croats to be arrested and put on trial (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 99–116).

Arrests, internments and repatriation – general characteristics

Ample data from the published and unpublished primary sources² show that opposition to occupation was continuing; in order to deter the population from engaging in these “harmful” protests, the authorities, at least in the first few months, cracked down by arresting individual civilians and groups in small towns. The authorities were convinced that they would frighten the population by arresting and interning people, in particular the instigators; internment or forced removal of the leading propagandists was seen as the appropriate way to teach the population a lesson. In this way, the authorities hoped to win trust and demonstrate their power.³

With circular No. 105-2-862, dated 24 January 1919, the Presidency and the authorities in Rome recommended a gentler approach in order for the occupation authorities to win the sympathy of the population. For this reason, they warned the local administration to study each case carefully and to remove only the really dangerous individuals.⁴ Nevertheless, Milica Kacin Wohinz concludes that those arrested and interned included many who had committed no crime against the new authorities; instead, they had only cultivated revolutionary or Slavic feelings. In practice, the logic of fear often prevailed in order to avoid excessive lenience, which could be interpreted by the populace as official weakness (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 110–111). This analysis confirmed Kacin Wohinz’s findings and provided additional information. In some cases, the authorities themselves admitted that they had arrested and interned individuals based on insufficiently verified data.⁵ The Ministry of the Interior admitted in March 1919 that repatriation was slow and that the budget for funding repatriation was insufficient.⁶ At the same time, communication between the responsible authorities was not always timely and contributed to the delays.

2 E.g., ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 72, Diario Storico-Militare, 3 novembre 1918–4 agosto 1919; b. 140, f. Notizario politico-militare 3a armata, 1918-19; Klen, 1977; Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 80–99; Visintin, 2000, 139–153; Apollonio, 2001, 43–56.

3 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 41, f. B: Commissariato Civile Pisino al R. Governatore [RG] della Venezia Giulia [VG] (Riservatissimo, N. 104), 20. 12. 1918; f. Complessivi: Cavalli, RG VG, Commissariato Civile Postumia al RG VG, Ufficio Affari Civili (N. 1288): *Propaganda antiitaliana*, 26. 3. 1919; b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Vaccari, Comando 3a Armata, Stato Maggiore [SM], al Comando del XXVI° Corpo d’Armata et al. (N. 2641): *Internamenti precauzionali*, 2. 4. 1919; b. 57, f. Jugoslavi, Cechi Slovacchi: Gandolfo, Comando XXVI Corpo d’Armata, SM al Comando 3 Armata (N. 2816): *Proposta d’internamento dell’impiegato Mrakoricic – persone sospette*, Abbazia, 22. 5. 1919; ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte II, A 16: R. Esercito Italiano [REI] al Ministero dell’Interno [MI] Direzione Generale della PS [DG PS] (Ufficio Riservato) (N. 105-105282): *Internamento del Dottor Jenko Ludovico, residente in Aidussina*, 21. 1. 1919.

4 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 41, f. Internamenti, Disposizioni di massima: Badoglio, (N. 105-2-862), 24. 1. 1919 (also in b. 55, f. Elenco internati); cf. Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 110.

5 E.g., ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 42, f. M: Bruno Micol.

6 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Elenco internati: MI, DGPS al RG VG (N. 12100.1.4): *Allontanamento di internati*, 19. 3. 1919.

The previously mentioned circular dated 24 January had still not been received by the Office for Military Affairs of the Venezia Giulia Central Administration by 13 February.⁷

On 20 March 1919, the Supreme Command of the Italian Army recalled the decrees issued during the war ordering internment for military reasons; however, the decree on the removal or internment of persons proven to have engaged in hostile activities and endangering public order and Italian interests remained.⁸ In other words, interpretation of the decree often depended in practice on the local authorities. The military command remained skeptical towards the population, and politicians sought to defuse the situation, knowing that negative publicity could be detrimental for Italian negotiators at the peace conference in Paris.

Given that the international press regularly repeated the argument about interned persons, Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando ordered that only those be interned who posed a threat to public safety; the Italian administration was aware that too-strict measures could cause considerable political damage.⁹ Following the instructions of the new Prime Minister, Francesco Saverio Nitti, and a circular of the Ministry of the Interior dated 13 July 1919, representatives of the local authorities began to collect data about internees, and only the most dangerous ones would remain interned; regarding repatriation, the local authorities had to provide their consent (or deny it).¹⁰ The Italian Socialists supported the release of internees and Nitti, who was worried because of the many accusations, recommended to the local administrations on 11 August 1919 that they be generous.¹¹ The Italian Prime Minister expressed again his support for the idea at the end of August 1919 (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 113–114).¹² Solving this problem entailed many further problems. The authorities were still highly distrustful of some internees.

It is not known how many individuals were arrested in the regions of Venezia Giulia, Rijeka and Dalmatia. However, the number must have been higher than that for internees proper because not everyone who was arrested was also interned. It seems that the Italian authorities interned the most civilians in February and March of 1919; some of them were kept for up to a year after the war ended.¹³ The dynamics of the arrests and consequent

7 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Elenco internati: RG VG al Comando Supremo (N. 776), 13. 2. 1919.

8 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 41, f. Internamenti, Disposizioni di massima: Badoglio (N. 105-1-2877): *Allontanamento ed internamento dalla zona di guerra*, 20. 3. 1919 (also in b. 55, f. Elenco internati); cf. Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 109.

9 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Orlando a Pettiti (Tel. 743128), 10. 6. 1919; Pettiti ai Commissari Civili (Tel. 5950), 10. and 11. 6. 1919; Pettiti a Orlando (N. 6295), 18. 6. 1919.

10 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Nitti: *Copia della circolare telegrafica a firma S.E. il Ministro, diretta ai Prefetti del Regno* (N. 19305), 13. 7. 1919; cf. Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Ufficio Centrale nuove Provincie al Comm. Gen. Civile di Trieste e Trento (N. 154): *Persone internate dai territori occupati oltre confine*, 15. 8. 1919.

11 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri al Commissario Generale Civile Trieste (N. 27001-R): *Internati civili*, 11. 8. 1919.

12 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 42, f. Internati – rimpatrio complessivi: Nitti, al Capo di SM (Circolare – Riservatissima, N. 1078.101): *Rimpatrio di internati nelle terre redente*, 25. 8. 1919.

13 E.g., ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 41, f. Internamenti, Disposizioni di massima: *Elenco degli internati dal 1 giugno 1919 al 20 agosto 1919* (also in b. 55, f. Elenco internati); cf. Bajc, 2012, 396.

internments was the same everywhere. The documents show that the reasons for denunciation and internment included the following: the person fostered “Slavic sentiment”; supported Yugoslav territorial claims; was anti-Italian; and somewhat later, that they were “slavocomunista”. According to previous studies, more interned civilians were from Istria than from the regions of Trieste and Gorizia; some individuals from Dalmatia were also interned. Most civilians were interned in remote locations in southern Italy. In the beginning, they were sent to various municipalities, villages or settlements in Sardinia; as many as 25 were identified in the documents (Bajc, 2012, 398). After June 1919, most of them were sent to the island of Ventotene because the Sardinians disliked them. The authorities explained that the local population did not like persons “*who opposed Italian claims*”.¹⁴ At the end of 1919, the authorities allowed the internees to choose a location in Central Italy. Some of them agreed to be relocated from one internment site to another in Central Italy (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 113); however, they were still being held against their will.

The civilians who were scattered around Italy did not know how long they would have to remain away from home. Some returned soon, after a few weeks or months; however, the majority returned after about a year or longer (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 113–114). The least data is available about living conditions in internment. Lavo Čermelj wrote that in Sardinia many internees fell ill with malaria. When the Italian authorities began to release them at the end of 1919, almost all internees came back ill and exhausted (Čermelj, 1965, 279–280). The data show that six civilians died during internment (Bajc, 2012, 399). The requests for release that were submitted by the interned men and women do not include detailed information about the situation in internment because their authors did not want to provoke the authorities too much and thus be denied release or improvements in their status; the majority thus mentioned “only” health problems. All other sources indicate that the living conditions were poor, particularly for those with pre-existing health problems.

The data about internee age is incomplete: some lists and other documents provide age data or basic birth information; older persons are also listed: the oldest was 69. Most interned women were probably between 30 and 40 years old; one widow Cular, Mandina Baskovic, was 60.

INTERNMENT OF WOMEN

Teachers

Most interned women were accused of being pro-Yugoslav or of distributing pro-Yugoslav propaganda. Documents show that they actively participated in demonstrations against the new authorities. “*She participated in anti-Italian demonstrations where insults were thrown against Italy*”¹⁵ was a typical accusation. The accusation went against

14 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 41, f. Complessivi: D’Adamo al Governatore Affari Civili (Tel. 1432), Padova, 7. 6. 1919.

15 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina alla DG PS (N. 541): *Persone sospette internate nel Regno*, 10. 5. 1919.

Antonia Duimovich/Dujmovič from the island of Cres (It. Cherso). In addition to her, others (men) found themselves on the list and were accused of similar “misdemeanors”. The document is interesting because the military command admitted in a cover letter that the data about interned persons was incomplete. A general note next to Duimovich says that she was an official.¹⁶ According to another list, she was interned in Vilandra in Sardinia.¹⁷ According to yet another list, she worked for the District Court in Cres.¹⁸ However, according to most other documents, she was a teacher.

As we shall see, relatively speaking, most “subversive” women belonged to this category. The authorities in general were highly distrustful of “Slavic” teachers, considering them dangerous anti-Yugoslav propagandists and irredentist (e.g., Andri & Mellinato, 1994, 39). Lavo Čermelj in his synthesis mentioned (1965, 279) that nine women teachers were expelled (i.e., interned), that the majority of them were from Istria and that they were imprisoned in the Venetian jail of *San Marco*, where the conditions were unhealthy. The data in the sources examined do not accord with Čermelj’s. We found data about six more female teachers, most of whom were from the Dalmatian islands and were interned in Sardinia. It can be concluded that Čermelj collected data about other interned female teachers, meaning that the total number of interned women was higher.

For some interned female teachers, only limited information could be obtained. Zora Eussich taught in Poreč. The authorities did not consider her very suspicious because she was placed on the list of persons recommended for release in the summer of 1919.¹⁹ Dinka Rade taught at a primary school in Mali Lošinj. She was first taken to Pula, then on 7 December 1918 to Venice and finally to internment. She was accused of being suspicious, of instigating people against Italy and of actively engaging in anti-Italian meetings.²⁰ The same applied to Stefania Goljevic.²¹ This could perhaps be the same person as Stefania Pljevic/Paljevic/Palievich, who taught on Lošinj in the Cyril-Methodius school. After her arrest, she was taken to Venice and then interned in Cosenza. She was accused of inciting the population against Italy with her acts, for which her teaching job served as a cover. According to other lists, she was originally from Bjelovar in Croatia, and the authorities recommended in 1919 that she be returned to her hometown and not to Lošinj. After a while, the General Civil Commissioner relocated her to Croatia, whence she returned to Veliki Lošinj in 1920 on her own. The authorities immediately suggested that she

16 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina alla DG PS (N. 541): *Personae sospette internate nel Regno*, 10. 5. 1919.

17 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: I list [s.a.].

18 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A degli internati del distretto politico di Pula – esclusi i sacerdoti* [September 1919].

19 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: *Elenco A – Elenco degli internati pei quali si propone la revoca dell’internamento* [s.a.].

20 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A degli internati del distretto politico di Pula – esclusi i sacerdoti* [September 1919]; cf. ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina alla DG PS (N. 541-IS): *Personae sospette internate nel Regno*, 10. 5. 1919, *Allegato al foglio n° 508 I.S.*, 9. 5. 1919, 4.

21 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A degli internati del distretto politico di Pula – esclusi i sacerdoti* [September 1919].

should be turned back together with a priest who was with her and another teacher, Betty Markus. The latter had also taught at Cyril-Methodius school.²² It was not possible to find additional information about her. Three possibilities exist: she was also interned; she was expelled; or she emigrated (fled) voluntarily. The authorities evidently believed that she opposed the regime, so she received a negative evaluation.

The documents also show that the authorities allowed two female teachers to return to Rijeka from Florence in early October 1919.²³ No other information is available about these two teachers. In the same period, twenty-four teachers reportedly returned from the city in Tuscany.

The most “subversive” was a group of five teachers from Lošinj/Cres. The greatest number of documents and amount of information is probably available about the following group: the mentioned Antonia Duimovich/Duinovich, Giovanna Opatić/Opatič, Gaspara Puric/Purich/Purič, Nicoletta Puric/Purich/Purič and Giovannina/Jasica/Giacomina Castellan/Castelan. Serious accusations against them included the following:

*[...] spreading propaganda at the Croatian school of St. Cyril and Methodius. After our units had carried out the occupation, their anti-Italian activities did not cease: instead, they intensified and became the center of Yugoslav and secessionist propaganda, culminating in a rebellious manner on 7 December 1918 upon the arrival of the French destroyer H. B. in the port of Cres.*²⁴

Castellano and Opatić were first transported to Pula, then on 7 December 1918 to Venice and finally to internment; the other three went to Venice on 10 January the following year and then to internment.²⁵ Together with a few other persons, they were interned on Sardinia. Despite the requests made by internees and their relatives to the authorities²⁶

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- 22 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina alla DG PS (N. 541-IS): *Persone sospette internate nel Regno*, 10. 5. 1919, *Allegato al foglio n° 508 I.S.*, 9. 5. 1919, 3; b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: *Per l'Archivio degli Affari Est. e Riservati* [some handwritten notes, s.a.]; *Elenco B: Elenco degli internati non pertinenti alla Venezia Giulia per i quali si propone il rimpatrio nel paese di pertinenza* [twice, s.a.]; *Gli internati compresi nell'elenco a del Comm. Generale Civile per la Venezia Giulia sono stati tutti rimpatriati* [...] [s.a.]; ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: *Internati Distretto di Lussino* [s.a.]; f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A: Elenco degli internati per i quali si propone la revoca dell'Internamento* [3 different lists, November 1919], b. 95, f. Internati – Persone che non risultano attualmente internate in alcuna località del Regno: Lussino al Commissariato Generale Civile (N. 493 Gab.); *Internati civili*, 12. 9. 1919; f. Linea di armistizio, Vigilanza – conflitti: Lussino al Commissariato Generale Civile (Tel. 750), 1. 7. 1920.
- 23 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 43, f. 1919 Internati (rimpatrio): De Fabritiis Firenze al Comm. Gen. Civile (Tel. 25813), 4. 10. 1919; Ministero della Guerra al Comm. Straordinario Militare VG (Tel. 656) [s.a].
- 24 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Lussino al Comm. Gen. (N. 797): *Maestre della scuola Croata dei SS. Crillo e Matodio di Cherso internate in Sardegna*, 22. 11. 1919; also in: ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16; cf. ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 42, f. C: Giacomina Castellan; b. 57, f. Duimovich Antonia.
- 25 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A degli internati del distretto politico di Pula – esclusi i sacerdoti* [September 1919].
- 26 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Antonia Purich al MI, 19. 8. 1919; MI al R. Comm. Civ. VG (N.12186-54; 143781), 6. 9. 1919; Lussino al Comm. Gen. (N. 589): *Purich Antonia. Istanza per il rimpatrio della figlia*, 22. 9. 1919; MI, DG PS al Comm. Gen. (N. 31419.R): *Purich Antonia*, 5. 10. 1919.

in many interventions for their return by important institutions, including the Vatican²⁷, representatives of the Italian civilian authorities on Lošinj in September 1919²⁸ and then at the end of 1919 opposed their return, claiming that additional investigation was needed in their case and arriving at the conclusion that they could endanger public order as follows:

*The return of these teachers before the final deadline would no doubt lead to regrettable incidents [...] we can expect an immediate escalation in Yugoslav propaganda, which could be lethal to the national interest.*²⁹

The central civilian commissariat for Venezia Giulia shared the opinion about the five teachers' past actions.³⁰ We can add that all five teachers were on the *C list* even in late 1919, when the authorities concluded that they should remain in internment.

The situation was still volatile because the demarcation (of new national boundaries) had not yet been completed in Paris. This was also the main reason that many were kept in internment or had their return delayed. The authorities were convinced that these teachers could endanger Italian interests with their activities.

The documents also show that some of them accepted relocation from Sardinia to Perugia. After reaching Perugia, there followed a stay at the *Pontificio di Santa Maria* tavern in Rome, from where they fled to Zagreb on 3 March 1920.³¹ (The military command warned in early 1919 that³² the internees frequently left the internment location on their own in an attempt to cross the former border). They probably never returned to their hometowns. This made the job easier for the authorities. The latter would probably not have allowed them to return because they had left without permission. We should also add that, in the spring of 1919, the authorities decided³³ that those persons who were no longer interned but had returned without permission should be stripped

27 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Quaranta, Santa Sede (N. 30856) [17. 11. 1919] [twice]; cf. Comm. Gen. Civile a Lussino (Tel. 1558), 20. 11. 1919 [six times]; ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: Direttore Generale del Fondo per il Culto a Nitti, 26. 1. 1920.

28 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 95, f. Internati – Persone che non risultano attualmente internate in alcuna località del Regno: Lussino al Comm. Gen. Civile (N. 493 Gab.): *Internati civili*, 12. 9. 1919.

29 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Lussino al Comm. Gen. (N. 797) *Maestre della scuola Croata dei SS. Crillo e Metodio di Cherso internate in Sardegna*, 22. 11. 1919 [three times]; also in ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16.

30 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: Comm. Gen. Civile al MI DG PS: *Internati di Lussino*, Trieste, 3. 12. 1919; cf. ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 95, f. Internati – Persone che non risultano attualmente internate in alcuna località del Regno: *Allegato N 2*.

31 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: Prefettura Cagliari al MI DG PS (N. 1822): *Purich Gaspara di Antonio e Castellan Giacomina di Biagio internate*, 12. 11. 1919; Salata al MI DG PS: *Internati della Venezia Giulia* (N. 10183-12 H), 7. 9. 1920; b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: Mosconi al MI DG PS (N. 0712-438): *Purich Gaspara e Castellan Filomena, ex internate*, 27. 2. 1920; ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: 1 list [s.a.]; b. 57, f. Duimovich Antonia; b. 95, f. Purich Gaspara e Castellan Filomena, Purich Nicoletta, Opatič Giovanna, Duimovic Antonia maestre a Cherso.

32 E.g., ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: Luzzato al MI DG PS (N. 1031), 25. 2. 1919.

33 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Luzzato all'Ufficio Affari Civili del R. Gov. (N. 1731), 3. 4. 1919.

of financial support (“*sussidio*”) and that they should be monitored if still considered dangerous.

Among the interned teachers were two sisters from Vižinada in Istria (in some lists the name was written as Castellier – Visinada, in others, Omišlje – Castelnovo Istria), Rosa/Rosalia and Zorka/Albina Rusich/Ruzich. Documents about their case are numerous; however, only the most relevant information will be presented here. The case is interesting because it shows that internment was often delayed. The two sisters were the main and most adamant organizers of the anti-Italian movement in the area of Motovun; they were also members of the Cyril-Methodius Association. In 1919, the local military command in Vižinada made the first suggestion that one of the sisters, Rosa, be relocated because she insisted on Slovenian as the language of instruction instead of Italian. The military command in Motovun proposed either internment on 14 April or the removal (“*allontanamento*”) of the two. Military command had been receiving intelligence about their harmful activities; for this reason, they were strictly monitored, which yielded additional evidence that they were carrying out anti-Italian propaganda among the peasantry and high-school students; in the home of one sister, they found a document that served as additional evidence (definitive for the authorities) about their harmful activities. For this reason, the authorities proposed on 21 April 1919 that they be removed or interned. The local authorities once again proposed internment on 1 May; two days later, the Governor of Venezia Giulia did the same (in addition, he proposed the internment of five priests: cf. Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 112). The Supreme Headquarters (*Comando Supremo*) decided on 7 May that they must immediately be escorted to the city of Civitavecchia, which the gendarmes did on 21 May; from there, they were taken to Sardinia and were interned in the town of Macomer. In November, they accepted the offer to be moved to Perugia. In the fall of 1919, both were placed on the list of persons to be repatriated; on 2 September, the military command in Pazin judged that the two were no longer a threat to “*our occupation*”. The Central Commissariat shared this opinion by the end of 1919.³⁴ The documents do not reveal when the two sisters returned or left the city of internment.

Less information is available for some other teachers, who had a fate different from the ones mentioned above. The terminology used suggests that they had not been

34 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 57, f. Ruzich Rosa e Zorka; b. 55, f. Elenco internati: *Persone per le quali sono state inoltrate al Comando Supremo proposte per l'internamento*, 1. 5. 1919; *Elenco degli internamenti politici affettuati nel territorio di giurisdizione del Governatorato della Venezia Giulia nel periodo novembre 1918 – giugno 1919* [s.a.] and 2 other lists [s.a.] and *Elenco degli internati già disinternati* [s.a.]; Parenzo al Comm. Gen. (N. 488): *Internati civili*, 2. 9. 1919; Parenzo: *Internati civili / privati*, 2. 9. 1919; f. Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A: Elenco degli internati per i quali si propone la revoca dell'Internamento* [3 lists, November 1919]; b. 41, f. Complessivi: Dalla Favera, RG VG al Comando Supremo (N° 3205, Riservato): *Allontanamenti*, 3. 5. 1919 (also in b. 55, f. [miscellanea]); D'Adamo, 7. 5. 1919; Gov. VG (N. O13048), Minuta, Trieste, 9. 5. 1919; Dalla Favera, RG VG al Comando Legione CC.RR. VG. (N. 3769), Trieste, 10. 5. 1919 (cf. in b. 57); ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: Prefettura della Provincia di Cagliari al MI DG PS (N. I853): *Rozic Zorka di Giovanni e sorella Rosa, insegnanti internate*, 12. 11. 1919; *Elenco A – Elenco degli internati per i quali si propone la revoca dell'internamento* [s.a.]; *Internati (Ven. Giulia) elenco a* [s.a.].

interned, just relocated by force. One such example was Maria Hrzick/Herzick, who worked as a teacher near Pazin and had reputedly exploited her profession for anti-Italian propaganda; in 1919, the authorities decided to move her to her hometown, the island of Krk.³⁵ Teresa Golmayer/Golmajer/Galmajer was a different case: in mid-March 1919, the authorities planned to “move” (“*allontanamento*”) her from Buzet in Istria because she had reportedly engaged actively in pro-Yugoslav propaganda; she repeatedly claimed that Istria would soon become part of Yugoslavia; moreover, she had frequently traveled to Pazin, from where she brought news about the Yugoslav movement. She was notified on 12 May that she had to leave Buzet. She was allowed to choose the destination in Istria to which she would relocate. She immediately appealed that the authorities had been misinformed about her and requested permission to stay because of ill health. The military command decided to grant her request on 22 May 1919; however, the agents in the field opposed that, claiming that she was still a threat. The documents show that various military and civilian posts had corresponded about her before early July 1919.³⁶

Families in internment

The leader of the Slovenes in Primorska and Istria, Josip Vilfan, had been informed that the headmaster (in Marezige) Tončič and his daughter from Podgrad had been interned.³⁷ The documents we examined did not include information about the internment, which again suggests that not all lists and documents have been preserved. Neither is much information available about the internment of the Rusig family from Ronchi. They were all discharged on 20 June 1919 and allowed to return home.³⁸

The Sindic/Siercich/Sindic couple, husband Bartolo/Bortolo and wife Olga, born Duniricaua, housewife, of Cres and Lošinj, were in a “joint” internment. The two had participated in an anti-Italian demonstration at which insults against Italy, the king and the queen were heard, which is why both were first taken to Pula, then to Venice on 7 December 1918 (according to other data on 10 January 1919) and finally interned in Inglesias on Sardinia, followed by Siena. In September and December 1919, the authorities opposed their return. The documents also show that they fled from internment in February 1920 and secretly returned to their hometown of Baška on Krk island. Both were then

35 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b 41, f. H: Brunero, CC.RR. V.G. (N. 11/62): *Proposta di trasferimento di Hrzich Maria* [...], 14. 7. 1919 (also in b. 55, f. Istruzione pubblica); Luzzato all'Ufficio Affari Civili R. Governat (N. 8389), 31. 7. 1919 (also in b. 55, f. Istruzione pubblica); b. 55, f. Istruzione pubblica: Commissariato Civili del Distretto Politico di Pisino al Cap. Grassini (N. 3786): *Maestra Herzich Maria – Chersano*, 21. 7. 1919.

36 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b 41, f. G: Luzzato, RG VG al CC.RR. (Riservato N. 3556): *Allontanamento maestra Golmayer Teresa di Ponguente*, 4. 5. 1919; b. 55, f. Istruzione pubblica: correspondence regarding Teresa Golajer, March–July 1919; Novogardo Capodistria al Gov. (N. 83): *Maestra Teresa Galmajer*, 30. 5. 1919; Robotti al Comado Supremo (N. 6710): *Galmajer Teresa*, 1. 7. 1919.

37 ARS, SI AS 1164, Vilfan, t.e. 822, a.e. 9: [to Josip Vilfan]: *Internacije iz Podgrada* [s.a.].

38 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 41, f. Internamenti, Disposizioni di massima: *Elenco degli internati dal 1 giugno 1919 al 20 agosto 1919 – Prosciolti dall'internamento e rimpatriati in seguito al decreto luogotenenziale 29 giugno 1919 N. 1054*. (also in b. 55, f. Elenco internati).

arrested and interned one more time, according to available data until at least September 1920. It seems that one child was with them.³⁹

The couple Federico Baucer and his wife Maria Kirchoff from Monfalcone were interned in Sardinia. In March 1919, they asked for a transfer to Grado. They claimed that they had personal matters to resolve and that they had been labeled as refugees just a month previously. The Intelligence and Security Service (Ufficio Informazioni Truppe Operanti or ITO) from Monfalcone opposed their return in April, claiming them to have been politically unreliable and opposed to Italy.⁴⁰

Another special case is that of Zorka Jaksa, who was granted permission to visit an interned and ailing relative in Sardinia, Attanasio/Atanasio/Anastasio/Antonio Lukavac/Lucavac/Lukovac/Lukavach. The allegation was very serious: that he had participated in the demolition of a bridge in order to hinder the arrival of Italian forces. The court could not prove him guilty; however, since the occupational forces did not find it appropriate for him to be in his home area, because they thought that he would continue with anti-Italian propaganda, they interned him on 8 April 1919, together with seven other Dalmatians. Lukavac wrote a letter to the authorities, explaining that he had major problems, and the Ministry of the Interior permitted him to change the location of his internment. In August 1919, Zorka Jaksa asked for permission to visit her relative. The authorities granted her permission and adopted safety measures; among other things, they sent the authorities her photograph and other information. The authorities in Dalmatia also decided that she could travel to Sardinia free of charge. However, she still had to pay a price for her visit: documents show that she stayed in Sardinia until October, joining her relative in internment. In September, the Governor of Dalmatia planned to release Lukavac and 24 others from Dalmatia; however, this happened only after the release of everyone on the *B list* – this means that Lukavac was on the *C list* of the most dangerous internees. After their return, the procedure was deliberately delayed. Lukavac again requested permission for both himself and Jaksa to be allowed to return via Venice, Trieste and Ljubljana to

39 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina (N. 541-IS): *Persone sospette internate nel Regno*, 10. 5. 1919, *Allegato al foglio n° 508 I.S.*, 9. 5. 1919, 4; R. Prefettura Siena al MI (N. 953), 15. 9. 1920; Mosconi al MI DG PS (N. 37856): *Sindicic Bartolo – internato*, 16. 12. 1919; b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: *Elenco C* [s.a.]; *Elenco C: Elenco internati civili per i quali si ritiene opportuno mantenere il provvedimento di internamento* [end of 1919]; Salata, al MI DG PS: *Internati della Venezia Giulia* (N. 10183-12 H), 7. 9. 1920; *Elenco di jugoslavi internati non compresi nelle liste presentate dal Governo della Venez. Giuli e della Dalmazia* [s.a.]; ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: *Internati Distretto di Lussino* [s.a.] and 1 more list [s.a.]; f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A degli internati del distretto politico di Pula – esclusi i sacerdoti* [September 1919]; Comm. Gen. Civile VG al PS Trieste (N. 1789): *Internati*, 3. 12. 1919; *Elenco C: Elenco di internati civili per i quali si ritiene opportuno mantenere il procedimento di internamento* [November 1919] and some handwritten lists; b. 95, f. Internati – Persone che non risultano attualmente internate in alcuna località del Regno: Presidenza Consiglio Ministri, Ufficio Centrale nuove Provincie al Comm.Gen. Civile VG (N. 11219/12): *Internati della Venezia Giulia*, 14. 10. 1920; *Allegato N 2*; Lussino al Comm. Gen. Civile (N. 493 Gab.): *Internati civili*, 12. 9. 1919; b. 96, f. Sindicic Bartolo e Olga internati.

40 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 42, f. Rimpatrio internati e profughi: Federico Baucer, Maria Kirchoff al Commiss. Affari Civili Monfalcone, 15. 3. 1919; I.T.O. Monfalcone-Cervignano a I.T.O. Trieste (N. 57B), 30. 4. 1919.

Belgrade. At the end of the year, he was finally allowed to leave Sardinia and stop for business reasons in Trieste for two days.⁴¹ It is very likely that this also marked the end of Mrs. Jaksa's adventure – if this had not already taken place.

Other examples of female internments

Among the interned were people from particular professions that the new authorities considered peculiarly problematic. One such example was a postwoman from Rihemberk (adjacent to today's Nova Gorica) with the surname Bandelj. The information about her went to Vilfan,⁴² who frequently received messages about arrests and internments. Unfortunately, no other information is available about this woman; her name does not appear in the archival documentation from Rome and Trieste, not even under another surname (in Italy, the surname Bandelj was typically changed as Bandelli). It is very likely that the authorities took action against her immediately after the war.

Another interesting example is that of Mrs Mandina/Maddalena Baskovic/Bascovic/Boskovic/Bašković, widowed Cular from Zadar. On 6 April 1919, she was interned on Sardinia, in Oschiri (near the city of Sassari). This person wrote a letter to the Minister of the Interior, dated to the end of July, stating that her health had deteriorated considerably (malaria fever) and that she had turned 60. The following month, the authorities began a correspondence about her case. After four months of internment, she was moved to the *B group* of interned civilians, who were due for gradual release in groups of ten per week – of course, they first wanted to release the ones considered less prominent and less suspicious (*A group*). However, her internment saga was not yet complete: she had to wait two more months before she was sent to Ancona on 14 October 1919, from where she was finally able to travel to Zadar on the 20th. Her crime was as follows: she ran a tavern in which the opponents gathered, and she herself constantly made propaganda towards Italy.⁴³ Taverns were always training fields for public discussion. In accordance with the

41 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte II, A 16: REI Comando Supremo, al MI DG PS, 17. 4. 1919; Lukavac Attanasio al MI, 9. 5. 1919; MI (Tel. 8634, 6825 and 9160), 9. [twice] and 16. 5. 1919; Millo al Comando della Brigata Gaeta: *Internato Lukavac Attanasio*, 23. 7. 1919; Municipio di Niš: *Foglio d'identità*, 14. 8. 1919 [and a photo]; Governo della Dalmazia: *Permesso di transito*, 27. 8. 1919; Lukavac Attanasio al Governo Italiano della Dalmazia, 22. 10. 1919; Millo al MI (N. 42661): *Istanza di Lukavac Attanasio di Kistagne (Dalmazia) internato in Sardegna*, 8. 11. 1919; MI (Tel. 22135): 19. 12. 1919; Prefettura Cagliari al MI DG PS (N. 1448): *Lukovac Atanasio di Spiridione*, 20. 12. 1919; ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16: *Allegato C – Nota degli internati cui si ritiene inopportuno chiedere il rimpatrio* [August 1919]; *Elenco degli internati per i quali si propone il rimpatrio a scaglioni di 15 per volta non appena afferruato il ritorno in Dalmazia degli internati compresi nell'elenco B* [September 1919].

42 ARS, SI AS 1164, Vilfan, t.e. 822, a.e. 9 [s.a.].

43 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte II, A 16: MI (Tel. 6825), 9. 4. 1919; REI al MI DG PS (N. 105-1-5200), 27. 4. 1919; MI, Minuta (N. 1453), 6. 5. 1919; MI (Tel. 8634), 9. 5. 1919; Mandina Bašković al MI, 31. 7. 1919; MI, Minuta (N. 26891 and 26891): *Baskovic Mandina vedova Cular, nata a Makarska e domiciliante a Zara*, 14. and 30. 8. 1919; Millo al MI DG PS (N. 35027): *Rimpatrio Baskovic Mandina*, 24. 8. 1919; al MI, 26. 9. 1919; b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16: *Allegato B – Proposti per rimpatrio a gruppi di 10 per settimana quando questo Governo informi essere giunti gli*

famous saying “in vino veritas”, people became more relaxed and willing to share their thoughts, which they would never have done when sober. The documents we examined also show warnings that opponents were gathering in taverns; one such example comes from Pazin, where pro-Austrian propaganda dominated and was tangible.⁴⁴ We expected more documents of this kind. We can also mention the case of a Slovenian teacher Alojz (Lojze) Sarđoč of Podgraje pri Ilirski Bistrici: he sang Slovenian songs in the tavern together with the local young men, which is why the authorities arrested all of them; he was put on trial in Trieste and sentenced to 6 months in prison; upon release, he lost his job (Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994, 30, 360, 505).

In April 1919, the authorities in Pula decided on internment exile to Sardinia (to a place called Golfo Aranci) for 18 people who worked in the shipyard and were accused of participating in “*dangerous Yugoslav demonstrations*”. All of them were first laid off, then arrested and taken to Venice, accompanied by gendarmes, whence they were supposed to proceed for Civitavecchia and then to internment in Sardinia. The group included Giuliana Ramas and Giustina Rüche/Ruche. The former was a dactylographer at the hydroplane port office; the latter worked in an office as a typist. When they reached Venice, the authorities decided that they would delay the internment of Rüche because she said she was unwell. She stayed in Venice, waiting to recuperate before being sent on to internment. They decided to release Mrs Ramas at the end of the year; she was supposed to move back to her home in the Czech Republic.⁴⁵ Although the documents do not reveal whether Rüche was ultimately interned, it is clear that she was taken away and accommodated in Venice away from home against her will.

Relatively little data was found about the following three interned women. Rosa Priorar/Piocar of Monfalcone was evidently less suspicious. She appears in the lists of interned persons from the summer and fall of 1919. These were people for whom the authorities suggested release, which obviously happened in her case, in either late 1919 or early 1920. She most likely went across the border to Yugoslavia, because the authorities wrote in 1920 that she was no longer among the internees; at the same time, information about her location was unknown. The reason for internment was her anti-Italian orientation.⁴⁶ Even less information is available about Antonia Zorzin; we know only that

internati elencati nell'allegato A [s.a.]; *Dalmati jugoslavi internati nel Regno* [s.a.]; Prefettura Sassari al MI (Tel. 380), 7. 10. 1919; Prefettura Sassari al MI (Tel. 391), 16. 10. 1919; Prefettura Ancona al MI (Tel. 4045), 20. 10. 1919.

44 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina, (N. 323RR8): *Situazione politica e propaganda jugoslava nel Distretto politico di Parenzo*, 11. 2. 1919.

45 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: Prefettura Venezia al MI (N. 4486): *Persone allontanate da Pula*, 13. 4. 1919 and the list; P.S. Golfo Aranci al DG PS (N. 555A): *Persone allontanate da Pula*, 23. 4. 1919 and the list; cf. ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: *Elenco A: Elenco degli internati per i quali si propone la revoca dell'Internamento* [3 lists, November 1919]; b. 95, f. Internati – Persone che non risultano attualmente internate in alcuna località del Regno: Monfalcone al R. Comm. Gen. Civile (N. 1931), 27. 9. 1920.

46 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: *Elenco A – Elenco degli internati per i quali si propone la revoca dell'internamento* [s.a.]; *Internati (Ven. Giulia) elenco a* [s.a.]; *Gli internati compresi nell'elenco a del Comm. Generale Civile per la Venezia Giulia sono*

she was interned in Lucca.⁴⁷ Antonia Urdich was acquitted on 11 June 1919 and allowed to return from internment.⁴⁸

One interesting example is that of a woman from Gorizia, Orsola Keber/Weber. No information is available about her “subversiveness”; she was simply labeled a housewife (“*donna di casa*”). She was 55, first interned on the island of Ponza, then after 25 July 1919 on the island of Ventotene; she was still there in December 1919. She was on some list that most likely appeared in late 1919; written on it is the somewhat illegible word “repatriation” (“*rimpatrio*”). The woman was then transferred to Lucca; she could also chose between relocation to Pisa, Siena or Perugia. The authorities finally granted her release in February 1920.⁴⁹ No information is available about the alleged crimes of some of these women. They were probably hostile in one way or another towards the new occupying authority.

Authorities’ disorganization

It turned out that repatriations were complicated and often took a long time. The local administration blamed others for that. There was also confusion between different levels of administration, and bureaucracy played a role in the delays.

Many documents on the subject are available. Some cases also reveal the disorganization of the authorities. For example, the clerks struggled with Slovenian and Croatian (and some other) family names. We found that they misspelled the names, which caused misunderstanding and delays.

Another problem involved people with the same name from the same place. For instance, near Kastav Spinčići, as many as six people shared the name Giovanni Spincic; the carabinieri had the job of arresting and interning him.⁵⁰

Occasionally, some of the authorities dealing with interned persons became aware of these mistakes. One such example was a note from the Commissariat in Lošinj in October 1919 that the General Commissariat in one of its letters, had misspelt the name of Olga Sindicic as Siervincich. It is interesting that in Lošinj they misspelt the given and

stati tutti rimpatriati [...],[s.a.]; ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]; *Elenco A: Elenco degli internati pei quali si propone le revoca dell’Internamento* [3 lists, November 1919].

47 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: *Elenco di internati non compresi nelle liste della Venezia Giulia* [s.a.].

48 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 41, f. Internamenti, Disposizioni di massima: *Elenco degli internati dal 1 giugno 1919 al 20 agosto 1919 – Prosciolti dall’internamento e rimpatriati in seguito al decreto luogotenenziale 29 giugno 1919 N. 1054.* (also in b. 55, f. Elenco internati).

49 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: Napoli al MIDG PS (N. 1038): *Persone allontanate dalla Venezia Giulia – Revoca di inernamento*, 12. 12. 1919: *Elenco degli internati civili della Provincia di Napoli originari dei territori occupati oltre il vecchio confine, non compresi negli elenchi A e B compilati dal Comiss. Gen. Civ. della Venezia Giulia* [s.a.] and another list without the title [s.a.]; cf. ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 95, f. Internati – Persone che non risultano attualmente internate in alcuna località del Regno: *Allegato N 3.*; f. Keber Ossola internata.

50 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Brunero, CC.RR. al RG VG, Ufficio Capo S.M. (N. 11/25): *Internamento*, 11. 5. 1919.

family name of the husband as Sindecic Bartolomeo.⁵¹ As has already been mentioned, the couple's names appeared in several versions, in particular their family name.

In addition to these cases of incomplete or incorrect data held by the authorities, it should be noted that the documents also prove that the authorities sometimes did not know where a particular person was interned. These “desaparecidos” included one woman, Cafanna Busicich/Busicic, from the vicinity of Lošinj. The authorities kept asking for her location in May of 1920.⁵² Some lists prove only that she had been interned and that the authorities believed at the end of 1919 that it would be better to keep her in internment. Just like the five teachers, she was on the *C list*.⁵³ The same applied to Nicoletta Busicich from Lošinj. No other information was available about her, which suggests that she must have been considered a dangerous element.

One open question is the extent to which misspelt first and/or family names and other inaccuracies or lack of organization delayed the release of internees and caused other problems. The same applies to expulsions or exclusions. The latter term was used for refugees who did not have their residence in Venezia Giulia and consequently were denied the right to return to the area for several months or longer (they were referred to as the “*non pertinenti*”). For instance, in the summer of 1919, the authorities inquired about Lydia Franzutti Zuccaro from Monfalcone. As a refugee with four children, she was still in “internment” in Acquate in the Lecco municipality (the northern province of Lombardia). As the authorities themselves admitted, a mistake must have occurred because the husband had been allowed to return in the meantime. They sought to resolve this unfortunate complication.⁵⁴

Unexplained cases

The first lists from December 1918 of suspicious persons due for arrest or forced relocation included several women. They were as follows: the widow Catterina Vucetic, the wife of Davide Horn, further Antonia Sanzin, Maria Gregorec and Valeria Flego of Trieste; Lucrezia Platzer of Gorizia; Mrs Slavez, the teacher Maria Muscovich and Maria

51 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Lussino al Comm. Gen. (N. 606): *Internati*, 2. 10. 1919.

52 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 95, f. Internati – Persone che non risultano attualmente internate in alcuna località del Regno: Ufficio Centrale nuove Provincie al Comm. Gen. Civile VG (N. 3944/12 H): *Internati della Venezia Giulia*, 2. 5. 1920; ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: *Nota delle persone segnalate dal Commissariato civile delle Venezia Giulia delle quali non si conosce il luogo d'internamento* [s.a.] [twice].

53 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 17, f. Propaganda jugoslava, a-16, Internati della Venezia Giulia: *Internati dalla Venezia Giulia: Elenco C* [s.a.]; *Elenco C: Elenco internati civili per i quali si ritiene opportuno mantenere il provvedimento di internamento* [end of 1919]; *Tra le persone comprese nell'elenco C del Gommisariato Civile della Venezia Giulia sono stati segnalati i seguenti individui quali internati* [s.a.] [twice]; ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Internati civili e sacerdoti, Corrispondenza ed elenchi [...]: Comm. Gen. Civile VG al Comando Divisione Interna Trieste (N. 1789): *Internati*, 3. 12. 1919; *Elenco C: Elenco di internati civili per i quali si ritiene opportuno mantenere il procedimento di internamento* [November 1919] and some lists.

54 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b 41, f. F: Lydia Franzutti Zuccaro.

Gariboldi-Polesini of Pazin; Francesca Milic, Dora Ercigoj, Amalia Zidaric, Leopoldina Ferlic and Giuseppina Slatić of Buzet or its vicinity; Darinka Deglic of Nerezine; Militza Flego of Sveti Ivan (probably near Koper) and Anna Catarinic, Ella Glazar and Emilia Madraz of Mali Lošinj.⁵⁵ No other information about their fate was available; they were not on the list of internees. Given the serious accusation that they had collaborated with the representatives of authorities of the previous regime or that they were propagandists or even spies, it can be concluded that the authorities adopted strict measures against them; they were most likely arrested and had to leave the area. Our interpretation rests on the assumption that the new authorities had already adopted strict measures by then, which they mitigated for political reasons only in a few months' time. We can also conclude that there had to be several such lists; however, we could not find them in the Trieste archives. What is particularly notable from the point of view of the present study is that, towards the end of the war or in the first few months after it, the authorities showed great distrust of women in Venezia Giulia. The situation did not change much over the next few months.

Some individuals were “only” arrested and then imprisoned for some time; it can be assumed that some of them were later interned. At the Peace Conference in Paris, the Yugoslav delegation sent a memorandum to French President Georges Clemenceau regarding Italian violence in Venezia Giulia, stating that many important Yugoslavs had been arrested for no good reason and imprisoned in Trieste. These persons included one woman: the gendarmes arrested Mrs. Poscic on 15 March 1919 while she was traveling from Rijeka to Volosko (near Opatija) because they found in her possession of a few copies of the newspaper *Primorske Novine* from Sušak, which the censors had declared illegal. She was taken to the prison in Trigori Street in Trieste. She was given a suspended one-year sentence. Her “guilt” was also that she was married to an important person: her husband, Dr. Ivan Poscic, was a lawyer, deputy and President of the National Council of the Volosko area, and had been arrested by the gendarmes together with two notable colleagues as early as 25 November 1918.⁵⁶ Another case of a woman under arrest was described in the memoirs (first published in 1928 in Ljubljana) of Jakob Soklič, one of the many “Slovenian” priests, who was persecuted by the authorities after the war. He writes that the authorities arrested Marija Ivac, a woman who sold milk in Trieste, on 6 July 1919. The arrest happened together with the arrest of a priest from Pregarje (a settlement in today's municipality of Ilirska Bistrica) (Soklič, 1989, 10). No information about the fate of the two women could be found.

At the end of February 1919, Italian authorities accused 33 persons of anti-Italian sentiment and propaganda. Consequently, the Navy proposed that they be denied the right to movement by not issuing them passports. This group included two women.⁵⁷ Evidence

55 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 57, f. Jugoslavi, Cechi Slovacki, RG di Trieste: *Elenco di cittadini* [...], 1. 12. 1918; b. 72, Diario Storico-Militare, 3 novembre 1918–4 agosto 1919; Allegato 9: ITO (N. 354): *Lista A) Elenco di cittadini* [...], 15. 12. 1918; (N. 501): *Lista A) Elenco di cittadini* [...], 23. 12. 1918; (N. 502): *Lista C) Elenco di cittadini* [...], 23. 12. 1918; (N. 506): *Elenco di cittadini* [...], 23. 12. 1918.

56 ARS, SI AS 1164, Vilfan, t.e. 823, a.e. 7: *Mémoire présenté à G. Clemenceu* [s.a.], *Annexe M*, 33.

57 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina al Ministero degli Affari Esteri (N. 193): *Persone alle quali è opportuno negare il permesso di circolazione*, 26. 2. 1919.

that all of them were interned is not available (however, other documents prove that some of the men were interned).

Other cases are also interesting. Viliem Safranko, reportedly a well-known Yugoslav propagandist, had already been removed from Rijeka by the authorities (he most likely was excluded). The Navy had collected highly incriminating intelligence against his wife, Maria: it suggested that she was very intelligent, smart and actively engaged in pro-Yugoslav propaganda; she socialized with French officers; she was also among the efficient confidantes of the Government in Zagreb and the pro-Yugoslav committee in Sušak; during one demonstration, she dared to spit on the Italian flag in scorn. In early February 1919, the authorities recommended that she be removed from the area.⁵⁸ The authorities also sought out the Schusterschic/Schusteschic/Sustersic couple. The husband Alois, a former Austro-Hungarian navy officer, at the end of the war developed strong pro-Yugoslav and anti-Italian sentiments; he was also related to the famous Slovenian politician Ivan Šušteršič. In March 1919, the Navy Command wrote that his wife Alice reportedly even surpassed him and entertained British and French officers and many Yugoslav agents at her home on a daily basis. The husband was reported to travel to Budapest and Zagreb frequently; he had also been seen in Paris and then returned home with the help of the French navy. The Italian navy managed to outfox Alice by infiltrating a person who reported on her and her husband's activities to the occupying forces. It was decided in March that both had to be excluded from Rijeka immediately.⁵⁹

There also exist a few lists of suspicious persons who were considered dangerous and would have to be excluded. The documents we examined do not provide much information about their fate. One of the names that appears on the list was that of Vele Feberta, who most likely was from Dalmatia.⁶⁰ Giuseppina Uicic, most likely also from Dalmatia, was accused of pro-Yugoslav propaganda. No evidence exists that she was interned, although the context suggests that she was, most likely together with a relative of hers.⁶¹

For some of them, the authorities suggested “only” forced relocation across the demarcation line, i.e., to the Kingdom of SHS; this measure was called “*allontanamento*” or “*sfratto*”. Among them were a few women. The decision to intern Mrs. Carla Spellich from Trieste was dated 5 January 1919. She was accused of harboring pro-Austrian ideas and openly opposed fellow citizens who supported Italy. She had demonstrated her position several times during the war. The Governor decided within a few days that “helping” her

58 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina (N. 120): *Segnalazione di persone da Vigilare. Coniugi Safranko e Dvorski Emanuele*, 5. 5. 1919; *Elenco delle persone menzionate nel fascicolo* [s.a.].

59 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina al Ministero degli Affari Esteri et al. (N. 274): *Pericolosi propagandisti Schusteschic (detto Sustersic) Alois e di lui moglie Alice*, 10. 3. 1919.

60 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: *Elenco delle persone menzionate nel fascicolo* [s.a.].

61 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: [one hand-written list, s.a.].

get across the border would suffice.⁶² On 18 January 1919, the military command issued a decree that six foreign nationals be relocated from Trieste. The group included Guglielmina Niederhofer, who worked at the S. Rocco shipyard.⁶³ The names of the following five appear on another list: on 30 January 1919, the authorities proposed this measure against Luis Milos (widowed Bram), of Trieste; on 7 February against Maria Globognin and Maria Lahaine of Postojna; two days later against Elisabetta Blazet of Trieste; on 22 March against Giovanna Cibin of Radece.⁶⁴ The “*allontanamento*” measure was envisaged for the 68-year-old Mrs. Maria Oblak of Materija: she was the mother of the teacher Giovanni Krizinick, who returned to his hometown in June 1920 (he evidently evaded the authorities) and then proceeded for Trieste and across the border to Yugoslavia. The authorities also decided that a new teacher, who replaced her son, would move into the house.⁶⁵

The circle of suspicious individuals was wide and included those who held suspicious political views, regardless of their ethnic background and/or gender. A special register contained data about suspicious persons for 1919–1929; there are a few cases of suspicious women who most likely happened to be in Trieste at the time or were connected with it in one way or another. In addition to ten women, there were seven women who were suspicious because of the new “red danger” or Bolshevik ideas. The authorities wrote that some of these women were extremely dangerous followers of Bolshevism (“*pericolosissima bolscevica*”). However, I believe that the register is incomplete.⁶⁶ Leopoldina Bonamie, who was of Hungarian origin, was very dangerous and a forceful activist against Italy. In May 1919, the authorities in Rijeka wrote that she had connections with the top Bolsheviks and worked in the *Danubius* shipyard. They proposed that she and a few others be excluded as soon as possible.⁶⁷ She thus worked in the shipyard that, according to the security service, included many dangerous individuals, who needed to be removed as quickly as possible because they spread anti-Italian propaganda, had spied during the war and had spread Bolshevik propaganda.⁶⁸ No other evidence could be obtained about these 18 women and whether or not they were ultimately removed. Evidently, there were relatively high numbers of women engaged in propaganda, particularly Bolshevik propaganda.

62 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 57, Questura al RG VG (N. 19/3): *Proposta di internamento di Spellich Carla fu Giovanni*, 5. 1. 1919; Governatore alla R. Questura Trieste (N. 229): *Allontanamento di Spellich Carla*, 9. 1. 1919.

63 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 57, f. Jugoslavi, Cechi Slovacchi: RG VG al Ten. Colonnello CC.RR. Celoria (N. 72): *Allontanamento di sudditi stranieri*, 18. 1. 1919.

64 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b. 55, f. Elenco internati: *Elenco delle persone per le quali è stato ordinato lo sfratto oltre la linea d'armistizio* [s.a.]; cf. b. 57, f. Jugoslavi, Cechi Slovacchi.

65 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 57: Brunero, CC RR al RG VG (N. 118/2): *Esito informazioni*, 13. 7. 1919.

66 ASTs, CC, Registro 86 [register of some suspects in alphabetical order, s.a.].

67 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte I, A 16: SM Marina (N. 578): *Proposta di espulsione da Fiume di alcuni operai ed impiegati del Cantiere Danubius*, 20. 5. 1919.

68 ACS, MI, DGPS, DAGR, 1920, b. 16, f. Propaganda jugoslava, Parte II, A 16: SM Marina alla Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (N. 13578): *Igegneri impiegati al cantiere “Danubius”*, 9. 2. 1919; SM Marina (N. 189): *Proposta di espulsione da Fiume di quattro impiegati del Cantiere “Danubius”*, 19. 2. 1919; SM Marina (N. 296): *Proposta di espulsione da Fiume di sei impiegati del Cantiere Danubius*, 8. 5. 1919.

The most dangerous two included Marina Brncic and Linci Prisić, who were active propagandists and activists for the Yugoslav movement in the Volosco municipality. Military command proposed internment for them on 9 April 1919.⁶⁹ The documents we examined do not show whether they were interned in the end.

One telling example is that of Giovanna Gregorich from Trieste. In late May 1919, Trieste carabinieri proposed that she be interned for anti-Italian propaganda. The following month, the central authority in Venezia Giulia decided only to issue her a strict warning and closely supervise her. She was not considered dangerous because she was illiterate and had no personality; she thus could not influence her environment.⁷⁰

CONCLUSION

Women in the area of the Northern Adriatic were exposed to various kinds of violence at the end of the First World War, regardless of their ethnicity. So far, however, research has shown that the strict measure of internment was used almost exclusively against Croatian and Slovenian women. Regardless of the partly problematic documentation (the data is inconsistent and time-consuming to process; in addition, Italian authorities themselves and consequently the internees experienced problems because of unreliable information), it can be said that the sources from both archives provide considerable information about a story that has so far received little attention, in particular its female side.

The occupation forces had a simplified view of the situation: for example, when it came to the names of Slovenians and Croats, they simply referred to them as Slavs (*slavi*), while simultaneously looking down upon them. On the other hand, the population showing any open disagreement was severely sanctioned. Generally speaking, the documents reveal a strong anti-Slavic sentiment; in addition, disrespect for the “other” and stereotypes are common. The schizophrenia of the new authorities was also evident because almost any kind of disagreement was perceived as suspicious.

The documents include several examples of requests by parents or other relatives for the return of their loved ones from internment or “merely” for information about them. At least indirectly, this could be considered a form of postwar violence that mostly affected women, who already had to care for their families, property, their children’s upbringing etc. Consequently, internment affected a much wider circle of the postwar population, including the mothers, women and children who stayed at home.

It is also assumed that the authorities refrained from using internment indiscriminately; instead, they referred to milder forms of forced relocation. The main objective of the authorities was to prevent dangerous or potentially dangerous individuals – including women – from harming the new regime.

Based on my analysis of the documents, I can say that the treatment of internees was more or less the same, regardless of their gender. My initial hypothesis has thus been

69 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 55, f. Elenco internati: Comando XXVI° Corpo Armata: *Allegato al foglio N° 2158*, 9. 4. 1919.

70 ASTs, RCGC Gab. b 41, f. G: Giovanna Gregorich.

confirmed. The only real difference concerned the numbers: out of around 850 interned civilians, a “mere” 35/45 were women. These numbers are inaccurate because some of the lists are partly illegible, and it is possible that some last and first names were duplicated. Nevertheless, internments represent an indirect indicator of the reality in the Northern Adriatic 100 years ago. It shows that women played an equal role, if to a smaller extent, in the dynamics of political and national conflict. They were active members of society in one way or another; they were not passive, which makes them look similar to interned men from the same period. This also means that the situation of women, at least with regard to the subject of this study, should be analyzed in the same way as that of men.

INTERNACIJE PO PRVI SVETOVNI VOJNI. PRIMER ŽENSK ZGORNJEGA JADRANA, 1918–1920

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POVZETEK

Novembra 1918, po koncu prve svetovne vojne, je na območju Zgornjega Jadrana (v Julijski krajini, na Reki in delu Dalmacije) italijanska stran – kot nova zasedbena oblast – aretirala več oseb in nekatere internirala v notranjost italijanske države. Podrobna analiza številnih dokumentov in seznamov, ki so shranjeni v osrednjem arhivu v Rimu (Archivio Centrale dello Stato) in tržaškem delu državnega arhiva (Archivio di Stato di Trieste), je pokazala, da je bilo iz omenjenega območja interniranih kakih 850 civilnih oseb, čeprav so se v tedanjem času in se tudi v nekaterih sodobnih delih pojavljajo precej nižje, a hkrati različne številke. Pregled virov med drugim pokaže, da so bile med interniranimi osebami tudi ženske. Če na splošno o internacijah po prvi svetovni vojni na slovensko/hrvaško-italijanskem stičnem območju še zmerom nimamo neke poglobljene analize, ostaja tematika interniranih žensk še manj raziskana. Avtor je ugotovil, da so oblasti večino interniranih žensk obtoževale, da so projugoslovansko usmerjene oziroma da so izvajale projugoslovansko propagando in da so se aktivno vključevale v druge protitalijanske aktivnosti. Največ takih "subverzivnih" žensk je spadalo v kategorijo učiteljic. Izkazalo se je tudi, da so bile repatriacije precej komplicirane in so se v nekaterih primerih močno zavlekle. Lokalne uprave so na primer odgovornost prenašale na druge, med raznimi resorji pa je obenem vladala zmeda in birokracija je očitno imela svojo težo pri zavlačevanju izpustitev. Hkrati beležimo nekaj primerov slabe organiziranosti oblasti: zapisovalcem so na primer slovenski in hrvaški (in nekateri drugi) priimki povzročali težave; večkrat so jih zgrešeno zapisovali in je zaradi tega prihajalo tudi do nesporedov in zavlačevanj. Pravzaprav ni bilo razlik v ravnanju do interniranih – ne glede na to, ali so to bili moški ali ženske. Prava razlika je bila le v kvantifikaciji: izmed kakih 850 interniranih civilistov je bilo žensk približno "le" 35/45. Številke niso povsem točne, ker je del seznamov slabo čitljiv in dopuščamo možnost podvojitve priimkov in imen. Kakor koli že, internacije so posredni pokazatelj razmer izpred 100 let, ko so bile na območju Zgornjega Jadrana – v prvi fazi problematične in travmatične tranzicije ob koncu prve svetovne vojne – tudi ženske, čeprav v manjšem številu, polnopravno vključene v dinamike političnih in nacionalnih sporov. Na tak ali drugačen način so bile angažirane oziroma niso bile pasivne in tudi v tem je slika zelo podobna glede na internirane moške. Z drugimi besedami: njihove razmere – žensk – moramo, vsaj v okviru naslovne tematike, preučevati ravno tako kot razmere moških.

Ključne besede: Julijska krajina, Reka, Istra, Dalmacija, Italija, ženske, učiteljice, internacije, nasilja, tranzicija

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