

THE EXCLUDED AMONGST THE EXCLUDED? TRST/TRIESTE AND (SLOVENE) SERVANTS AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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ABSTRACT

By taking into account census data, contemporary periodicals, archival material and oral sources, the article addresses the question of how the status and work possibilities of (Slovene) female servants in Trieste changed after the WWI with the newly established border between Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It examines the persistence and permutations of their migratory routes and analyses how servants who continued to work in Trieste after the war had to deal with the Italianisation process and which organisational networks supported them. It also analyses how Slovene servants, born in places that after the war remained outside Italy, negotiated their citizenship.

Keywords: servants, Trieste, post-war transition, gender history, census, migrations, citizenship

LE ESCLUSE TRA LE ESCLUSE? TRST/TRIESTE E LE DOMESTICHE (SLOVENE) DOPO LA PRIMA GUERRA MONDIALE

SINTESI

Prendendo in considerazione i dati dei censimenti, i periodici contemporanei, le fonti archivistiche e orali, l'articolo affronta la questione di come lo status e le possibilità di lavoro delle serve (slovene) a Trieste cambiarono dopo la Prima guerra mondiale con il nuovo confine tra l'Italia e il Regno dei Serbi, Croati e Sloveni. Esamina la persistenza e le permutazioni dei loro percorsi migratori e analizza come le domestiche rimaste a lavorare a Trieste dopo la guerra dovettero affrontare il processo di italianizzazione e quali reti organizzative le sostenevano. Inoltre, analizza come le domestiche slovene nate nei luoghi che dopo la guerra rimasero fuori dall'Italia negoziavano la propria cittadinanza.

Parole chiave: domestiche, Trieste, transizione postbellica, storia di genere, censimento, migrazioni, cittadinanza

INTRODUCTION¹

Several studies have already given attention to the notion of invisibility, exclusion and marginalization of domestic workers over time and in different geographical locations. The invisibility derives from the fact that paid domestic labor has been feminized and situated on a crossroads between the public and private sphere (Verginella, 2006; 2021; Summers, 1998), bridging “the divide between a reproductive occupation and one performed for economic gain” (Cox, 1997, 62; Boris & Fish, 2015). It has been seen as “non-work” because it has replaced the unpaid work of family members. As such, it has been usually excluded from the public and political discourse about workers’ rights and even not properly addressed by the working movement (Nederveen Meerkerk, Neunsinger & Hoerder, 2015), despite the fact that servants in the past constituted as much as 10–20% of the working population (Fauve Chamoux, 2004, 2; cf. also Summers, 1998, 354–355).

From the US to Italy and from France to the Habsburg Empire, urban domestic workers also experienced marginalization because they had often migrated from the neighboring countryside or even from more distant locales. Dirk Hoerder points out how the servants were perceived as “‘Others’ of different class, of a different rural or proletarian way of life, of ‘alien’ ethno-cultural background” (Hoerder, 2015, 74). As foreigners, they were usually excluded from the benefits of local welfare or caritative organizations. The concept of “foreignness” is, as Sylvia Hahn pointed out when dealing with female migrants in the Habsburg Empire, a variable construct that changes according to the political, economic, and social situation. Being a foreigner was strongly dependent upon the social status and gender related factors. “Above all, single women were the targets of reproach, rejection and mistrust by the locals” (Hahn, 2001, 122).

For single women of foreign origin and therefore also for many servants, the period after the First World War brought important changes in terms of their invisibility, exclusion and marginalization. Several researchers have shown that in the period of any kind of social transitions, women in general are often confronted with a distinct, more accentuated marginalization and exclusion from various social spheres, such as the political, economic and cultural domains (Cockburn, 2004; Sharp & Stibbe, 2011; Björkdahl, 2012). On the other hand, transitional periods also provide women with some possibilities for (simpler) inclusion and empowerment instead of just exclusion. This is because they are – especially in tumultuous times but also otherwise – not subject to such strict control due to their allegedly unpolitical posture compared to men. It is therefore possible to observe an “inclusion-exclusion paradox”² when dealing with them in post-war transitions.

After taking into consideration post-war modes of exclusion and inclusion, the article addresses the baseline question of how the status and work possibilities of (Slovene) female servants in Trieste changed after the First World War with the fall of the Habsburg Empire

1 This article was first elaborated upon 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 funding scheme [ERC Grant Agreement n. 742683].

2 <https://project-eirene.eu/about/objectives/>.

and the newly established border between Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kingdom of SCS), later Yugoslavia. In order to answer this question, a sample of quantitative demographic data from the population census of 1910 was collected and compared to those of 1921 and 1931.³ 172 house numbers from Trieste's predominantly rich district Borgo Teresiano were analyzed together with clues from contemporary periodicals⁴ and archival material all combined with oral sources (transgenerational memory). An overview of the broader context of the status, employment and changed migration routes of Slovenian servants in the aforementioned period was also taken into account.

PREWAR VISIBILITY

Servants in the Trieste area represented a politically important population category before the war. In this regard, Trieste differs from various other locales (Sarti, 2015, 31). Taken from certain angles, say in terms of the media spotlight, servants were anything but excluded or “invisible”. This specific situation derives from the fact that the town saw a large influx of Mostly female Slovene servants from the Austrian Littoral (Istria and particularly the Goriška – Gradiška region) in the period before the First World War, i.e., from the so-called surrounding labor pool, as well as from other nearby territories of the Austrian crown lands where Slovenes constituted the majority of the population (Styria, Carinthia, and, first and foremost, Carniola). Additionally, servants also came from the neighbouring Italy, particularly from Friuli. The swiftly increasing number of Slovene servants in the city attracted the interest of Slovene nationalists, who – as representatives of the largest national minority – sought to assert their interests in the face of the Italian majority. It was this majority who exercised control over city authorities. Meanwhile, Slovene nationalists in the city had gained economic and cultural power and a rising political voice, especially since the 1880s.

The potential of the large group of Slovene servants became evident particularly in the period of population censuses (especially that of 1910), when Slovene nationalists' extensive propaganda activities directed at servants aimed to get them to express their loyalty to the nation by identifying Slovene as their language of communication in the census sheets. Thus they sought to prevent Slovene servants from succumbing to assimilation effects of living and working in Italian families. The maintenance of their national loyalty and purity was seen as especially important also because, as several scholars suggest, women were imagined as “cultural and biological reproducers of the nations” and as such they were imagined as “boundary markers” (Cergol Paradiž & Testen Koren, 2021b; Verginella, 2006). Italian nationalists, on the other hand, made efforts to retain national loyalty and protect interests of Italian

3 AGT, Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1910, b. 24–27, 30–31; Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1921, b. 41–42, 44–48, 52–53; Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1931, b. 211, 213, 215, 217, 223–224, 237, 239, 243, 246, 249, 252, 255, 259, 263, 269, 270, 272, 277, 283, 286, 291, 293, 298, 303–307, 313–315.

4 The following periodicals were reviewed: *Il Piccolo*, *Il Popolo di Trieste*, *Soča*, *Gorica*, *L'Indipendente*, *Il Lavoratore*, *Slovenec*, *Slovenka*, *Domoljub*, *Edinost*, *Jutro*, *Gospodinjstva pomočnica*, *Koroški Slovenec*, *Mladika*, *Ženski svet*, *Straža*, *Socialna misel*, *Mariborski večernik*, *Jadranka*, *Slovenska žena* etc.

servants. Especially those from the Kingdom of Italy, who often did not hold Austrian citizenship and were along with other migrants from the same country granted a special status by the city, the so-called *regnicoli*. Both, the Italians and the Slovenes tried to get the servants on their side by establishing special organisations for their protection and even by encouraging them to be organised in trade unions.⁵ However, the question of how successful this political organization/endeavour actually was on either national end remains. Servants choices, to some extent, show a different practice than expected by both Slovene and Italian elites. In this sense, according to Marta Verginella, they did not acted only as “boundary markers” like the nationalist propaganda wanted them to but more as “cross-boundary mediators”.⁶ Here thus emerge, as Elise von Nederveen Meerkerk pointed out, all those “ambiguities of working and living in the households of others, where distance and intimacy were intrinsically entangled” (Nederveen Meerkerk, 2015, 250).

TRST/TRIESTE’S POST-WAR REALITY

Until 1921, when census data of all inhabitants (including servants) in Trieste was collected again, the general situation for the Slovene population had changed dramatically. After the First World War and the disintegration of the Habsburg Empire, the whole Austrian Littoral and part of Carniola went under Italian military administration and was renamed to Venezia Giulia (Julian March). Many from Slovene community hoped that the Italian occupation would only be temporary. However, the Peace Treaty of Rapallo, signed on November 12, 1920 determined the border between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of SCS definitively, thus allocating the Julian March (Trieste included) to Italy.

The population census in 1921 came just a few months after the (nowadays) symbolic act of nationalist repression, when Italian Fascists burned down the Narodni dom (National Hall) on July 13, 1920, a building that then served as a center for Slovenes and also other Slavic communities in Trieste (Vinci, 1997, 226; Klabjan & Bajc, 2021). The Fascists had already occupied key political positions in the country after 1922. By the decade of the 1930s, when the third census of those chosen to serve here as a source for analysis took place, they had already implemented an intense denationalization policy against Slovenes, in Istria Croats. The so-called *fascismo di confine* or *fascismo di frontiera* in practice included political, economic and cultural guidelines and measures to secure the

5 Apart from the Zavod sv. Nikolaja (Institution of St. Nicholas, est. 1898) – the first Slovene female charity organization, with a focus on taking care of out of work servants – support was also granted by the National Labor Organization. Education and servant gatherings took place in the spaces of the Narodni dom (National Hall). Emphasis must also be put on the wide-ranging church organizational network that, along with the school sisters’ assistance, primarily took care of the girls’ wellbeing who had come into town to work as servants. The Italians attempted to organize in a similar manner, mostly with the intention of boycotting Slovene servants. However, they failed to match their Slovene counterparts’ success either on an organizational level or in their effectiveness (cf. Cergol Paradiž & Testen Koren, 2021b).

6 <https://project-eirene.eu/about/objectives/>; Verginella, 2006.

eastern border of the Italian state. It brought about a national and social transformation of the border area with political repression, persecution and impediment to the social rise of the “second-class population” (Kacin Wohinz & Verginella, 2008, 35; Apollonio, 2004; Cattaruzza, 2007; Purini, 2010; Vinci, 1997).

All these post-war changes raise questions about how the accentuated national struggles in Julian March affected servants. Did the newly established border and new political reality disrupt their migration routes and redirect them to other locations? Or did the economic forces that motivated Slovene servants to migrate and Italian employers to hire overcome political obstacles, so that this occupational category, unlike others such as teachers and civil servants, remained to some extent unaffected? In order to at least answer these questions to a certain degree and to establish the changes occurring in the structure of housekeeping in Trieste, we compared the population censuses of 1910, 1921 and 1931. 172 house numbers in Trieste’s predominantly rich Borgo Teresiano district were analyzed; we used the same anagraphic numbers in the register of residents for all three years, each year corresponding to one census.

The first major difference when comparing the census data from 1910 and 1921 – before and after the war – is already visible in terms of the absolute number of servants in the sample and therefore presumably also generally in the city of Trieste. In 1910, the previously mentioned 172 house numbers included 1,437 households, 555 of which employed servants (38,6%). In 1921, 444 out of a total of 1,846 households had servants (24%). This initial comparison demonstrates that in the first post-war period, the number of live-in servants in Trieste decreased somewhat.⁷

The problem of the decreased supply of housework in Trieste after the First World War was also addressed by the local press. In the period of 1919–1920, the Italian paper *Il Piccolo* regularly published work ads from the newly founded Ufficio comunale per la mediazione del lavoro (Municipal office for the mediation of labour) (*Il Piccolo*, 3. 12. 1919, 3). The demand for servants always exceeded the numbers of potential employees and the *Il Piccolo* stressed, that there was an “absolute reluctance in young girls to provide services to families” (*Il Piccolo*, 3. 12. 1919, 3). At the time, this phenomenon was identified as an immediate effect of the war. The periodical *Edinost*, for instance, stated that women “had gotten accustomed to better occupations” during wartime and that they were deterred from working as servants also because they “received war-related benefits” (*Edinost*, 9. 3. 1919, 3).

The decline in the number of servants in Trieste can be seen in the context of a general trend that has swept Europe since the turn of the century. In fact, in most Western European countries, the greatest increase in the number of maids took place in the 1880s, followed by a decline. Behind this so-called servant crisis/problem (*crise de la domesticite* (Fr.); *crisi delle domestiche* (Ita.); *Dienstbotenfrage* (Ger.), etc.), there were many causes, notably the extension of compulsory education and, with it, literacy, the stigmatisation of servant work, the possibility of working in industry, etc. (Sarti, 2015).

7 This is also evident if all servants in the sample are taken into account (as some of the households had more than one servants). Their number decreased from 754 in 1910 to 494 in 1921.

The following years and especially the time of the economic crisis (late 1920s and 1930s) severely narrowed the employment opportunities for men and women both in Italy (and Trieste) and elsewhere in Europe (globally). Many women therefore again turned to occupations more traditional and therefore more accessible to them in order to survive and provide for their families. One such occupation was servanthood. It is all the more interesting that despite these changes, the percentage of households with servants in Trieste decreased further (to 17%) by 1931, when the census was re-conducted. The further decline in the share of servants could also be related to the (economic-political) status of the city itself and the changed migration routes of a certain segment of the female population, which is discussed in more detail in the chapter below.

On the other hand, some characteristics of the occupational group of servants did not change significantly after the First World War. The migration pattern dubbed “life-cycle-servanthood”, which covered young women in a relatively short period before marriage, was still prevalent among them. The percentage of unmarried servants in the analyzed sample decreased only slightly: from 95% in 1910 to 94% in 1921 and then to 93% in 1931, while servants’ average age increased only slightly, growing from 28 in 1910 to 30,6 in 1921 and to 31 in 1931.⁸

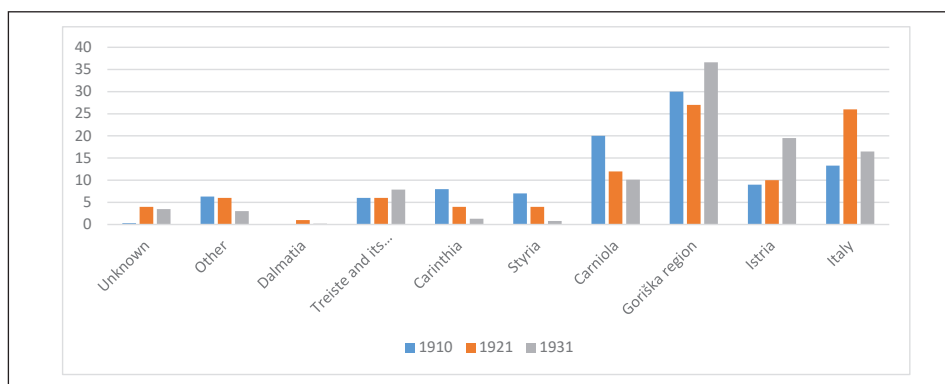
While the war and post-war situation did not considerably diminish the importance of “life-cycle servanthood” in Trieste, another significant change was in terms of servants’ place of birth (Graph 1). Compared to 1910, 1921 saw an increase of servants born in areas that were part of Italy already before the war, namely from 13,30% to 26%. The share of servants born in Istria is somewhat larger – from 9% to 10%. The number of servants born in the former Goriška – Gradiška region is lower, from 30% to 27%. However, it was the share of servants born in (former) Carniola (from 20% to 12%), Styria (from 7% to 4%), and Carinthia (from 8% to 4%) that decreased the most.

By 1931, the expected share of servants from former Carniola, Carinthia and Styria was further reduced, while the share of those from the Goriška – Gradiška region was on the increase. Compared to 1921, the number of immigrants from the “old” Italian provinces was also on the decline.

These changes in numerical ratios again reflect the general effects of the war and, above all, the post-war situation and political changes. Until 1921, when the first post-war census was carried out, various segments of the population that had left the city during the war were gradually returning to Trieste at different speeds and through minor or major obstacles. Among those were former soldiers, prisoners of war and also civilians who had survived the war in exile. Although the military conflicts during the war did not affect Trieste directly, the severe shortages forced many to move elsewhere, usually inland in the Habsburg Empire. Former Italian citizens, the so-called *regnicoli*, also escaped, while others were interned. Especially after the opening of the Isonzo Front, many fled to Italy (Cecotti, 2001).

8 A slight increase from 2% (1910) to 3% (1921) and to 2% (1931) in the case of married and from 2% (1910) to 4% (1921) and then again to 4% (1931) in case of widowed servants.

Graph 1: Trieste's servants by place of birth in the censuses of 1910, 1921 and 1931 (in %) (AGT, *Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1910*, b. 24–27, 30–31; *Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1921*, b. 41–42, 44–48, 52–53; *Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1931*, b. 211, 213, 215, 217, 223–224, 237, 239, 243, 246, 249, 252, 255, 259, 263, 269, 270, 272, 277, 283, 286, 291, 293, 298, 303–307, 313–315).



The measures taken by the Italian authorities in connection with the post-war return of the population – in addition to the reduced influx of population from former Austrian Crown lands, especially Carniola, now cut off by the border – explain why the ratios in Graph 1 turned in favor of servants born in the “old” Italian provinces. After the war, the Italian authorities were more effective in organizing the return of those refugees who had survived the war in Italy than those who in inland Austria-Hungary. Furthermore, as early as the beginning of 1919, the governor of Trieste and the Julian March, Carlo Pettiti di Roreto (from November 3, 1918 to 1919), issued an order stating only residents who had previously enjoyed the so-called *Heimatsrecht*, *Pertinenza* in the (now former) Austrian Littoral could return. This did not apply to other immigrants, even though they had lived and worked there for many years before the war.

According to Slovene historiography, the aforementioned Pettiti's order and the related measures that clearly hindered the return of people of Slovene ethnic origin can be seen as “the first episode of ethnic cleansing directed at Slavic minorities in the Julian March” (Purini, 2010, 37). Such measures intensified in the following years and did not only affect the more politically exposed representatives of the Slovene minority in Trieste (priests, teachers, politicians, lawyers and other intellectuals), but also servants.⁹

The Italian authorities in Trieste began to encourage the immigration of Italian servants immediately after the war and deliberately sought to restrict the immigration of Slovene and German servants. On February 22, 1919 the Civil Commissioner of Trieste and the Territory wrote to prefectures of the Kingdom of Italy that Italian refugees who had worked as *regnicole*

9 Various decrees applied directly to Slovene as well as German servants, the latter being significantly fewer in number.

in Trieste before the war had to be given absolute priority over servants of other nationalities, i.e., “non-Italian elements”. In his opinion this would be politically appropriate because the “Italian national element” would thus reclaim “the old line of work” in Trieste. The already mentioned governor of Trieste and Julian March Petitti di Roreto replied that he would do everything in his power to replace Slovene and German servants with Italians.¹⁰

This appeal voiced by the Civil Commissioner in February 1919 evoked a strong response. Many documents demonstrate how it was implemented in practice. For example, a telegram dated March 13, 1919 includes a notice addressed to the Civil Commissioner that six Triestine women refugees, former servants, were sent from the Prefecture of Caserta to Trieste. At the same time six families, about 22 people, 14 of whom were women working as cooks, chambermaids or servants, were sent from the town of Maddaloni in the same prefecture.¹¹ Moreover it is to point out a letter sent on March 17, 1919 by the Civil Commissioner to the president of the Comitato Triestino per il collocamento delle domestiche italiane (Council for Recruitment of Italian Women Servants) Amalia Musner, an important figure of the Triestine interwar charitable activities, informing her of all of the numerous servants who were on their way to Trieste.¹² As attested by these documents, the back and forth between the Civil Commissioner and other agents striving to bring or reintroduce the “Italian national elements” into the structure of servants in Trieste, was quite vibrant.

Not only the authorities but also certain employers intervened in favor of the Italian servants – the *regnicoli* – in cooperation with like-minded individuals and minor organizations. In a letter dating already to December 9, 1918, the employer Dott. Silvio Vianello writes how he wants his former servants, Adele and Luigia de Rosa, who had worked for him before the war and were forced to leave due to them being *regnicoli*, to resume working for him.¹³

There are also some documents that show how the immigration of foreign women, especially those from Carniola and Styria (who were prevalently Slovenes, in some cases Germans), was actively obstructed. One of many instances of granted refusals is that of Teresa Röttl from Styria, who was denied her residence permit on the grounds that foreign servants occupied posts belonging to “local elements”. The document dated October 31, 1919 was signed by the Civil Commissioner.¹⁴ Nevertheless, in this particular case, a favorable opinion was issued by the General Civil Commissioner the following day, but the pattern of exclusion of Slovene or German servants remained.¹⁵

10 ASTs, CCCTT, b. 1.

11 ASTs, CCCTT, b. 1.

12 ASTs, CCCTT, b. 1.

13 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 58. Permessi per venire nella Venezia Giulia. Passaggi linea Armistizio. Contrabbando. Relazioni con Alleati. Varie.

14 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 58. Permessi per venire nella Venezia Giulia. Passaggi linea Armistizio. Contrabbando. Relazioni con Alleati. Varie.

15 The General Civil Commissioner is documented to have been uninclined towards the immigration and employment of non-Italian servants in Trieste; his rejection raises several questions. Is it possible to view such actions in the light of international affairs, alongside peace conferences? After all, this was a period where the borders between Italy and the Kingdom of SCS were not set in stone and Italy, along with the conduct of its authorities in the border provinces, was under the scrutiny of various commissions as well as the international community (cf. Apollonio, 2001; Mosconi, 1924).

These measures and private initiatives, together with the change of the border and state frameworks, thus divided the migration routes of the former (at least in the eyes of the national elite) homogeneous group of Slovenian servants in Trieste. They created distinctive demographic profiles as well as different legal statuses and, last but not least, ways of including and excluding women. Slovenian servants have since experienced different fates. While mainly those from the nearby Slovenian immigration basin came and were still coming to Trieste despite the changed political situation (1), others redirected their migration routes (2). Last but not least, we must not forget the group of servants who remained in the city since before war time, despite the fact that they originated from those former Austrian Crown lands that belonged to Yugoslavia later on (3). These three different groups are discussed below.

THOSE WHO CAME, AND CONTINUED TO COME

Trieste

During the interwar period, the Slovene newspapers repeatedly emphasized that “there were a large number of Slovenian servants in Trieste” (*Jutro*, 4. 8. 1926, 5). It is a fact that the migration pathways from both the nearby but also more distant Slovenian basin surrounding Trieste into the city proper remained open the entire time, despite the economic hardships and the political tendencies favoring the Italian servants. It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Slovene servants in Trieste and its change given the available resources and, last but not least, the fluidity of national identity. The preserved census sheets from 1921 do not contain data on the language of communication as the pre-war censuses did. The published data provides only the cumulative number of the Slovene-speaking population and does not indicate its distribution according to occupation. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that when counting the population in 1921, numerous pressures on the Slovene-speaking population were observed, creating additional doubts about the credibility of the data on nationality. Daily newspapers such as *Edinost* continued to observe irregularities much like before the war. This includes deliberately incorrect entries of the language of communication in the (this time separate) forms, which were filled in together with the census sheet with or without the knowledge of the registered families in question. Extortion and threats of firings also cropped up. In short, increasingly uncompromising pressures were applied. But unlike in the case of the previous census, neither the authorities nor the national elites dealt with servants. This is one of the reasons why Slovene servants, who – as the paper states – before the war had stood out in the public campaign in favor of the Slovene language and within community due to their large numbers in the city, now became invisible. They had receded from the agendas of intellectual elites who, due to their own problems with the new rulers, had not been able to deal with servants and their problems. Nevertheless, Slovene servants experienced the fate of their more politically exposed compatriots at least to some extent, according to various indications.

Both the articles in the newspaper media at the time and oral testimonies show that – despite the stereotype of hard-working and subordinate Slovene servants, which still worked in favor of their employment – relations worsened in the families where the girls served due to the general political climate, which incited national hatred. Many Slovene servants had to endure insults at the expense of the supposed cultural inferiority of their nation. As Bogdan Kravanja attests, his grandmother Ana Cuder (1913–1999) from Trenta in the Soča Valley, who worked as a servant in Trieste between 1929 and 1942, as well as all her colleagues, were all addressed with the derogatory term “sciava”, “sciavetta”, “Slovana” by their mistresses. The latter treated them as cheap, inferior Slavic labor (Kravanja, 2019).

Such national tensions are also evidenced by the public discourse of the time. The local Italian nationalist press, for example, stepped up the derogatory rhetoric it had used before the war. The newspapers *Il Piccolo*, *L'Indipendente* and also the newly established fascist newspaper *Il Popolo di Trieste* wrote about Slovenian servants as “mentally inferior creatures,” “mental slaves without human dignity,” etc. They complained about their presence in the city and offered space in the paper to employers who would not tolerate the young women they hired socializing in the Slovenian community. Thus raved an angry employer on page one of the *Il Popolo di Trieste*:

Egregio sig. Direttore Assiduo lettore del 'Popolo di Trieste', leggo spesse volte delle corrispondenze provenienti da paeselli dell'Istria, riguardanti propagande slave, fatte così sempre da preti e nascoste sotto varie apparentemente innoque. Qual meraviglia per me nel sentire dalla viva voce della mia ragazza di servizio, una slava, come purtroppo quasi tutte quelle a disposizione qui a Trieste, che nel cuore della nostra città stessa, e precisamente in Via Risorta, esiste un circolo di trattamenti prettamente slavi, diretto da un prete slavo. Quivi ogni domenica o festa di tutto l'anno. So danno dei festini più o meno religiosi dove naturalmente tutti parlano o recitano in slavo quasi fossimo in un qualunque paesello del nostro Carso. Anche la reclame per questo circolletto, per non dire propaganda, viene fatta da foglietti scritti a mano in lingua slava e muniti da firme o timbri che rivelano facilmente l'origine [...]. A parte altre considerazioni che qui non è il caso di fare, la cosa non deve più essere tollerata, non bisogna dimenticare gli sforzi che fa il Governo Nazionale per riportare i paeselli slavi della nostra regione alle loro origini latini, o che le stesse ragazze ricevono ormai l'educazione italiana nelle scuole di casa l'oro. Purtroppo quanto espongo più sopra fa parte di un problema che non dovrebbe esser più oltre trascurato. Ogni anno vengono convogliate, io direi quasi artificialmente, a Trieste, diverse migliaia di serve slave, che in un lontano domani, in grandissima parte formeranno a loro volta famiglia. Queste famiglie, dati i precedenti, non potranno certamente essere italiane. A mio modo di vedere bisognerebbe convogliare queste ragazze in altre città della Penisola, possibilmente lontano dalla Venezia Giulia, dove senza difficoltà potrebbero trovare lavoro, data loro gran dote di faticone conosciute, e nello stesso tempo lontane d'ogni

*propaganda diverrebbero in breve ora delle brave ragazze italiane. Già prima della guerra, qui da noi si era studiato il problema, e in certa maniera risolto. Si faceva venire il più possibile ragazze dal Trentino, dalla Carnia oppure dal Friuli, cercando di tener più lontano possibile le ragazze slave.*¹⁶

The quoted passage illuminates the complex reality which Slovenian servants in Trieste were involved in after the First World War. In the words of the outraged employer, one could recognize the growing fear caused in Italian nationalists by the constant immigration of these mostly young, reproductively capable foreign girls. The solutions to this important migration problem in the eyes of the fascists have also been disclosed in the form of the need for planned relocation to the interior of the Kingdom of Italy, addressed below. The quoted passage also sheds light on the importance (Slovenian) church structures held for the servants in the absence of other institutional forms of nationally-focused socializing and association.

At that time, the Catholic Church developed mechanisms for the integration and control of migrant woman workers, thus – and this was for the religious authorities especially important – preventing their moral slip into prostitution and human trafficking. Its individual organizational initiatives took care of social life and also brought a certain amount of social security, which was lacking on the part of the state due to the absence of appropriate legislative and social structures at the time. Already in the Kingdom of Italy itself, one may find several others initiatives intended for the protection of servants similar to the Slovenian example. For instance, German-speaking Tyrolean women were offered a similar organizational network by German organizations led by nuns in northern Italian cities during the fascist regime (Lüfter, Verdofer & Wallnörfer, 2006). Local church associations and the press similarly monitored the migrations of Friuli women. As Ermacora explains, church organizations in Friuli (similarly to those in the Trieste countryside) had an ambivalent attitude towards women's migration, quite like the fascist regime. By leaving the countryside, women eluded surveillance and they also influenced the customs and mentality when they returned to their original environment.¹⁷ The subversion of societal virtues inevitably brought about by modernization, together with the economic crisis that put women in the position of breadwinner, irresistibly overturned the previously established and controlled hierarchies of sexuality, society, and family. Migrations were therefore initially strictly controlled and restricted by the state, moreover in confessional circles they had a morally negative connotation. Yet both state and church migration policies had changed in the face of the mass unemployment that began in the

16 *Il Popolo di Trieste*, 28. 2. 1928. Cf. also: *Jutro*, 2. 3. 1928: Proti slovenskim služkinjam, 9.

17 While the church showed a negative attitude towards fascist leisure practices that were in conflict with religious ideals and the loss of control over believers, both regimes were close in their views on population decline, anti-urbanism, women's morality, and some aspects of the struggle against the "ill effects" of migratory movements. They both tried to establish a new, more stable society – and in the woman and the family, or rather through control over them, they saw the possibility of maintaining traditional Catholic society on the one hand and realizing the project of a new fascist state on the other (cf. Ermacora, 2010, 106–108).

late 1920s and intensified in the 1930s, accompanied by the issue of security, public order and peace. The church then turned to the promotion of controlled emigration and to the revalorization of this “painful but necessary phenomenon” (Ermacora, 2010, 94). Thus, it also adopted a more protective approach towards migrant women. Emigrating workers – servants – were watched over by women’s orders, St. Mary’s Societies, and special organizations such as Opera di Protezione della Giovane (Action for the Protection of the Girls) from Udine. Even more often, individual priests from their places of origin guaranteed their “moral well-being”, and also connected them with suitable employers in distant cities (Ermacora, 2010, 103–105).

Back to Trieste; excerpts from the newspapers at the time and public controversies also show how important the confessional environment was for Slovene servants. These sources present Slovene religious worship in the center of the city as if it had been tailor made for them. When, in May 1921, the diocese of Trieste ordered the abolishment of Slovene liturgy during rites at the old St. Anthony’s in Trieste, an appeal was made in *Edinost*:

Dear Sir Bishop! On Sundays, the Slovenian servant does work for the family all morning. In order to be able to go to church, she has to skip hours of precious sleep. How would you expect one walk to the new St. Anthony’s, especially a servant who serves in the vicinity of St. Andrew or St. Justin, etc.? Are you not aware that these poor souls had to leave the old St. Anthony’s immediately after mass in order to be available to their mistresses after 7:30? Do you not know that these girls are on the clock not just based on the hour, but also by the minute? And there are not just a few of these girls; there is one in each household. And yet we do not want to think that, according to Your views, the soul of a servant is less valuable in front of God than the soul of the President of the Italian P. P., as one might surmise from your new decree.¹⁸

The words uttered in 1923 by Bishop Bartolomassi also show how closely the Italian national imagination identified Slovene religious individuals in the city center with the Slovene servants. In 1923, a delegation of Trieste Slovenes appeared in front of him due to the persecution of the Slovene language from the parish church of St. Anthony, as seen, undoubtedly an important center of Slovene confessional activity in the city. They were led by the lawyer and also delegate of the Italian parliament dr. Josip Vilfan. According to *Edinost* writes Bartolomassi used the occasion to explain that the secular authorities would have banned the use of Slovene language in any case. At the same time, he claimed that due to the knowledge of Italian among the Slovenes of Trieste, there was no real need for sermons in the Slovene language because the servants, these “military Minnies” who supposedly “spread filth across the city” and regularly met up with soldiers, spoke very good Italian (*Edinost*, 23. 1. 1923, 2).¹⁹ The Slovene reaction, including that of the

¹⁸ *Edinost*, 1. 5. 1921: Preganjanje slovenskega jezika v Cerkvi, 2.

¹⁹ *Edinost*, 21. 1. 1923: Vedno lepše, 3; *Jutro*, 21. 1. 1923: Odmev: Cerkvena politika napram Slovencem v Trstu, Domače vesti, 3.

servants who offered their testimonials in the newspapers, was sharp, especially since they were themselves practicing Catholics and part of the church community where they had traditionally sought moral refuge.²⁰

Although Bishop Bartolomassi was involved in this awkward state of affairs and was inclined towards Italian nationalism, he did not accept the violence of fascist squadrons. Due to his clear condemnation of fascist crimes against the Slovene and Italian population in the Julian March, he was forced to resign from the diocese of Trieste;²¹ in December 1922, he was transferred as bishop to Pinerola near Turin (Piedmont). He was succeeded by Bishop Fogar, who also followed the Holy See's guidelines for the use of the Slovene language but firmly believed that the persecution of Slovene priests would harm the Church and Italy in the long run, as it would only deter Slovene believers (and citizens) from the Church (and the state). Even worse, it would lead them into the blasphemous wing of Yugoslav communism or Serbian Orthodoxy. Thus, Bishop Fogar continued with the hitherto established church practice, and with his *modus operandi* at the same time managed to slow down the Italianization of the Slovene confessional space (Apollonio, 2004; Pelikan, 2012).

It is the relative linguistic and confessional security that Slovene believers still had in Trieste under the auspices of Bishop Bartolomasi and his successor Fogar, along with the aforementioned importance of the support of the church network, that partly explains why the local Marijina družba (St. Mary's Society) still stood up for Slovenian servants. Other secular Slovene organizations – including the Zavod sv. Nikolaja (St. Nicholas Institution), which did not recover organizationally after the First World War – no longer existed. In 1936, *Slovenec* described Marijina družba as “the only and the largest Slovene church organization in Trieste.”

The organization, originally called the Marija Milostljiva za žene in dekleta (St. Mary the Merciful for Women and Girls Society), henceforth the Marijina družba for short, was founded in 1899. In its early years, the members helped the servants by participating in the Zavod sv. Nikolaja, but then, due to ideological disagreements, they set up a separate initiative for sick and unemployed servants. The Zavod sv. Cite (St. Zita Institution), which was rechristened as the Zavod sv. Marte (St. Martha Institution) in 1911, thus existed within the framework of the Marijina družba. Meanwhile, in 1909, members bought their property – Marijin dom (St. Mary's House) – on Risorta Street 3, which is mentioned in the above quote from the newspaper *Il Popolo di Trieste*. After the First World War, the number of members initially decreased on the grounds of many girls from Carniola, Styria and Carinthia going home based on the new political situation. After 1920, however, numbers began to rise again. In 1924, they also founded the cooperative titled *Ekonomska oskrbovalnica Zavoda sv. Marte za službujoča dekleta* (The Institute of St. Martha's Economic Outpost for Young Girls), which helped organize courses in cooking, sewing, ironing, etc. In 1928, the society had 271 regular and 258 itinerant members. According to the memoirs of the Society: “In the initial years of fascism, the

20 *Edinost*, 21. 1. 1923: Vedno lepše, 3.

21 For more about the role of the Church in national battles cf. Valdevit, 1979; Pelikan, 2012, etc.

members clung even more to Marijin dom, where they felt at home. Here they could still speak, sing and find entertainment in their own language. Elsewhere, this was proving more and more perilous.” However, in 1930 “fascism was applying more and more pressure. Individual girls distanced themselves from the group in order to have peace of mind with their employers.” Marijina družba “lived in constant fear that Marijin dom would be taken away or destroyed. Several times, Italians told an Italian family in one of the neighboring houses to move away because they were going to burn down Marijin dom. These good people in turn informed the Society” (Prešeren, 1975, 49). The fascists did indeed end up prohibiting socializing in Marijin dom on May 10, 1936. During fall, after the departure of “prefect Tiengo, a terrible persecutor of Slovenes,” (Prešeren, 1975, 65)²² socializing was allowed once again. In such uncertain circumstances the spiritual (and actual) care for the servants was provided by the school sisters. As one of the few active Slovenian organizations in Trieste, the Marijina družba survived the fascist regime and the war period.

The fact that the Marijina družba was still able to function in these extremely unfavorable conditions, cannot be only explained by the aforementioned strategic attitude of the bishops of Trieste towards worship in Slovene language. The perseverance of the society’s operations stems at least in part from the invisibility of this professional segment of the population, as emphasized in the introduction of this paper. Servants could be described as the “excluded among the excluded”; firstly, they were excluded due to their gender, and secondly, also due to the specificities of their occupation. However, it was exactly this invisibility, the marginal position, that enabled them to express their national affiliation in certain limited circles (perhaps even publicly?). They were among the few with this ability, thus fitting into the core of the “inclusion-exclusion paradox”, as marginality within the social and political space enabled them to be included in a field within which other prominent representatives of the Slovene community no longer had the opportunity to operate.

Meanwhile, the possibilities of reviving secular initiatives for the organization of Slovene servants in Trieste remained significantly more limited.²³ However, the need for organizing beyond political constraints remained. This is also evidenced in views “from the outside”, from the Kingdom of SCS, as published by *Jutro* in 1927: “Slovenian servants in Trieste need shelter. Home. They lack a place of entertainment suitable for Slovenes, so they loiter and dance around. Only a well-designed organization can keep [them] going. Who will take the reins? In this respect, things used to be settled a while ago.” (*Jutro*, 12. 1. 1927, 7) This mention of a well-organized organization refers to the *Zavod sv. Nikolaja*, in the context of which the post-war efforts of the main initiator and selfless leader of the Institution, Marija Manfreda Skrinjar (1857–1931), must not be

22 Carlo Tiengo, Prefect, governor of the Province of Trieste, from January 16, 1933 to August 1, 1936.

23 By the end of the 1920s, the border fascist regime had succeeded in banning the use of the Slovene language in public and in Italianizing local names. They demanded the replacement of Slovenian teachers and priests with Italian ones. In 1927, all associations were abolished, and in 1928, Slovene political parties, periodicals and cooperatives, which held great importance for the countryside, were banned.

ignored.²⁴ She strove to sensitize a broader circle of people and restore the care network for servants. However, these attempts unfortunately died down quickly. Above all due to the lack of support mostly from various sister organizations (who were nonetheless ideologically competitive and existed under the auspices of the Church) and even from the Slovene elites, who themselves had to face increasingly greater pressures from the Italian side. Last but not least, obstruction by the Italian city authorities was also present. Skrinjar's post-war story illustrates the narrowing of the possibilities of (secular) action for the benefit of Slovene servants in an increasingly repressive border environment. Skrinjar remained a loyal representative of the poorest and most marginalized women, among them mostly Slovene servants, even though this took more shape in words in the daily newspapers following the war than deeds. She welcomed the publication of *Jadranka* in Trieste (1921–1923), at that time the only Slovene women's paper in the Julian March.²⁵ She recommended it should be read widely as the "paper of the nationally downtrodden and politically neglected", meaning not merely by the educated "Yugoslavian female population of the Julian March. [...] It should be read especially by the servants living here among us!"²⁶ She saw the Slovene servants in Trieste as the last, silent bastion of what was once the "largest Slovene city", one she could not and was not allowed to help anymore. In the early 1930s, Marija Skrinjar retreated from the public and lived in Križ near Tomaj in the Karst region. She continued to speak out to the last in *Gospodinjaska pomočnica* (Ljubljana, 1931–1940) and participated in the establishment of a network of organizations who took care of servants/domestic workers in the Kingdom of SCS (later Yugoslavia). She warned them of organizational pitfalls and unnecessary, harmful ideological stress in their profession, which, in her own experience, had brought the women only ill.²⁷

Back in Trieste, a series of Italian secular initiatives sprang up after 1918 at least partly dedicated to the servants. In most of these, Amalia Musner (named above)²⁸ was involved as president of the Trieste section of the Consiglio Nazionale donne Italiane – C.N.D.I.

24 Marija Skrinjar née Manfreda, was a national aspirant, publicist and initiator of women's activities in Trieste. She worked primarily in favor of the most vulnerable groups in society. On her initiative and with the support of Fran Podgornik, the editor and publisher of the Slavic Council, *Slovenka* (1897–1902), the first Slovene women's newspaper, came to prominence. Before the war, Skrinjar published mainly in *Slovenka*, then after the First World War in *Jadranka*, *Slovenska žena*, *Ženski svet* and *Gospodinjaska pomočnica* (cf. Verginella, 2007, 72–74; Verginella, 2017, 6–7, 68, 90).

25 *Jadranka* followed the *Slovenka* (1896–1902) in becoming the second Slovenian women's paper, succeeded yet again by *Ženski svet* (1923–1941). The latter moved to Ljubljana in 1929.

26 *Jadranka*, 2, 1922, no. 2: Marija Skrinjar, Našemu ženstvu, 13.

27 *Gospodinjaska pomočnica*, I, 9–10, 1931/1932: Pismo pijonirke za našo stvar, 104–106; II, 11, 1932: M. Skrinjar, Nekdaj in sedaj, 121–122. Cf. also: *Gospodinjaska pomočnica*, X, 1, 1940: Franja Petrič, Zakaj – komu v korist – sejejo prepri?, 2–3.

28 Even before the war, Amalia Musner was at the forefront of many social initiatives with a distinctly irredentist note, which led to her falling out of favor with the Austrian authorities who accused her of "playing at politics under the pretext of charity". Due to her irredentist activities, she was interned in Linz and Vienna during the war. After the war, she continued her social endeavors in many areas, which is why in 1934 she was awarded the *Medaglia d'oro di prima classe coferitale del min. dell'ed. naz.* (*Il Piccolo: Il Piccolo delle ore diciotto: Le ultime notizie: 22. 3. 1934, Ad una benemerita gentildonna*, 2).

(National Council of Italian Women).²⁹ The Trieste section was formed immediately after the First World War and soon gained 550 members. Among other charitable activities, it organized the Ricreatorio per le donne lavoratrici (Ricreatorio) as early as 1920, a kind of afternoon meeting place for female workers and servants (*Il Popolo di Trieste*, 25. 1. 1921, 4). As *Il Piccolo* wrote a few years later on, the Ricreatorio's purpose was certainly not only entertainment in the form of games, recitals, music, etc. but also that of "Italian education." To this end, *alloglottes*³⁰ were also accepted at the Ricreatorio. The Ricreatorio shut down after three years of active operation due to the unsuitability of the premises. In 1924, the Trieste section of the C.N.D.I. called for its revival and at the same time proposed the organization of other forms of help, some directed at servants. Above all, they pointed out the need to establish a "women's shelter". They explained as follows: "Quante e quante si presentano al nostro ufficio ragazze sole al mondo, che richiedono lavoro, perché prive di alloggio e di mezzi. La città [...] non dispone di alcun ricovero femminile a prezzi modici, eccetto, doloroso a constatarsi, L'Internationales Heim [International Home], retto dai tedeschi, e L'alloggio del Sacro Cuore [Shelter of Sacred Heart], retto dai sloveni."³¹ The success of the German and Slovenian women's shelters thus proved to be a source of unease for Italian women of charity in Trieste.

The C.N.D.I. failed at establishing the above mentioned house for (young) women (alloggio) in the following years, nor could they reestablish their own meeting place. When they disbanded in 1931, they transferred their activities to the Fascio Femminile (Female Fascio),³² much like many other women's organizations at the time. The care for immigrant servants or women workers on the Italian side of the city was probably actively taken over by Catholic organizations, such as the already mentioned Opera di Protezione della Giovane, which also had its section in Trieste.

THOSE WHO WENT IN OTHER DIRECTIONS

Towns in North Italy

Trieste remained in the interwar period a center for the migration of Slovene servants from the former Gorizia-Gradiška, the Julian-Venetian mountainous region and its immediate hinterland. Regardless, it eventually lost its absolute primacy in absorbing female labor. As early as 1926, *Edinost* firmly stated that "before the war, the main migration current of our servants went to Trieste and Alexandria. Now, especially the girls from the hills, where most of our servants came from, no longer turn to Trieste." Instead, they "began to settle [...] in the upper Italy," especially "in Milan, which is filled to the brims with them."³³

29 C.N.D.I. is still operational (see: <https://www.cndi.it/>).

30 *Alloglottes* were Italian citizens of non-Italian national origin; in Julian March Slovenes or Croats.

31 *Il Piccolo della sera*, 11. 3. 1924: Per un ricovero femminile, 2.

32 *Il Piccolo: edizione del mattino*, 4. 12. 1931: Tutte le attività passate al Fascio Femminile, 3.

33 *Edinost*, 7. 10. 1926: Naše služkinje, 2; also *Jutro*, 9. 10. 1926, 7, etc.

Contemporaries attributed the oversaturation of the Trieste market to the reasons behind the partial redirection of the flow of Slovene servants to other larger cities in the “old Italian provinces”.³⁴ In the period between the two wars, the population of Trieste continued to grow due to immigration. For example, in 1931, 7,080 people immigrated there, 3,464 of which were women (*Jutro*, 7. 2. 1931, 9). Yet the once leading Austrian seaport began to stagnate economically after joining the Kingdom of Italy, a country with many naval ports. It also grappled with the loss of its hinterland, an area it shared a long-standing connection with (Purini, 2010). As has already been pointed out, the demand for servants did not decrease after the war. Still, over time, less favorable economic conditions at least indirectly led to declining incomes and, consequently, poorer working conditions for them. Simultaneously with the change of the state border, the path towards the economically prosperous northern Italian industrial centers, was wide open. Slovene girls therefore started to migrate there and were employed *en masse* as servants. Many smaller and economically less prosperous places in South Tyrol suffered a similar fate as the Trieste and Gorizia countryside at that time (Lüfter, Verdofer & Wallnörfer, 2006). German-speaking servants moved from there to northern Italian cities after the annexation to Italy. Another similar example are servants from the mountainous areas of Friuli in the Julian-Venetian region (Ermacora, 2010). Especially in the 1930s, the migration of girls and young people in general from rural areas of Friuli to larger urban centers proved to be essential in resolving the rural crisis, where the mass unemployment of men contributed to the impoverishment of the population. The “migration boom” of mostly servants (including girls employed in service and trade), as Ermacora describes the emigration wave from Friuli between 1931 and 1939,³⁵ was a true “mass phenomenon” (Ermacora, 2010, 101; Sarti, 2001; Kalc, Milharčič Hladnik & Žitnik Serafin, 2020; for the period later on see Mlekuž, 2004).

Yet cities such as Padua, Mantova, Milan, Turin, Florence, Genoa or even Rome and Naples did not attract Slovenian servants simply due to the possibility of good or better earnings and – compared to, say, Alexandria³⁶ – proximity.³⁷ If the Slovene newspapers of the time and oral testimonies are to be believed, they were also relatively well received by employers. North Italian cities perpetuated the stereotype of “hard working, conscientious and fair” Slovene servants, much like it was the case in Klagenfurt (*Koroški Slovenec*,

34 *Jutro*, 19. 10. 1933: Trst se brani priseljevanja, 2; *Edinost*, 10. 10. 1926: Slovenci v Milanu, 1.

35 Ermacora analyzes these migratory movements on the basis of municipal statistics and Catholic sources as censuses failed to capture them. In 1933 there were supposed to be 10,000 young girls outside the region, in May 1936 about 16,000, and in 1938 approx. 17,000. According to pastoral visitations, about 50% of these servants were said to work in Rome and Milan, followed by Turin, Genoa, Naples and other hotspots of the peninsula (cf. Ermacora, 2010, 101).

36 Aleksandria and Kairo in Egypt were the destinations of mass migration of Slovene woman from nowadays Goriška, Karst and Vipava Valley. They were named aleksandrinke, and they worked as servants, nannies, wet nurses and governess from the middle of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century (cf. Milharčič Hladnik, 2015; Makuc, 1993, etc.).

37 *Mariborski večernik Jutra*, 31. 1. 1930: Slovenske izseljenke. Naše služkinje. – Slovenke v Nemčiji, Franciji in Belgiji. – Afrika, Amerika in Avstralija, 2.

4. 5. 1927), Zagreb, Belgrade or the far-off Alexandria. One can assume that chauvinist and racist contempt was less present there as it was in Trieste, where servants grappled with different forms of border fascism. Milena Ferletič née Mozetič, for example, did not know Italian when she moved from Vrtojba to Milan in 1929 to a family that treated her well. As her nephew Renato Podbersič says: “They [masters] were fascists, they were in the party but they were not hard-line. Even when her friends came, and they [friends] came rarely, they [masters] did not bother her at all if they [friends] spoke Slovene with her.” (Podbersič, 2020) Milena pulled double duty for the family, she was both governess and servant. She had a long and busy schedule with practically no free time, but she later remembered that she was paid well and “it wasn’t bad for her”. Slovene newspapers conveyed similar messages from Milan, especially regarding the governesses as their “work was not hard, they had a relatively good salary, clean and nice apartments, but little free time.”³⁸

Once again, many similarities between Slovene-speaking servants and German-speaking servants from South Tyrol can be observed. As was the case amongst the Slovenes, many Tyroleans in distant Italian cities felt less nationalist hatred than if they had served the Italians in their home environment, according to several oral testimonies. Working conditions were better and earnings were higher. They were especially popular with Italian families because they were able to pass on their knowledge of the German language to their children, which was becoming increasingly important at a time when Italy was coming closer to Hitler’s Germany (Lüfter, Verdofer & Wallnörfer, 2006). Nevertheless, German-speaking Tyrolean nationalists approached the departure of young women to Italian cities with mixed feelings, which also applies in the case of Slovenian nationalists and is clearly reflected in the Slovenian press at the time.

Slovene newspaper media established an ambivalent attitude towards the relatively favorable conditions for the work of Slovene servants in the “old Italian provinces”. On the one hand, they wrote about these new migration flows with sympathy in light of the difficult social conditions and widespread unemployment at home. At the same time, they called for the immediate organization of Slovene societies for Slovene emigrants. Yet on the other hand, individual writers worried that the increased migratory flow into the interior of Italy will only accelerate the assimilation towards which the Italian fascist authorities strove at the time.³⁹ The process was seen as the next, advanced phase of forced transfer from the Julian March. Various other professional profiles were already subject to this, according to *Slovenec*: “The fascists brought Slovenian teachers, officials and railway workers from the Littoral to Italy. The problem of the servants will also be solved in a fascist manner. Fascist will be met with the fact that Slovenian servants themselves are more popular than Italian ones in actual Italian families, because they are generally considered to be more honest.”⁴⁰

38 *Edinost*, 10. 10. 1926: Slovenci v Milanu, 1.

39 *Slovenec*, 29. 2. 1928: Tudi služkinje je treba premestiti v Italijo, 2.

40 *Slovenec*, 29. 2. 1928: Tudi služkinje je treba premestiti v Italijo, 2.

Yugoslavia

As already pointed out above, servants from Carniola, Styria and Carinthia, or more precisely from Slovene-speaking areas that would belong to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia after 1918, also migrated to Trieste in large numbers before the First World War. In light of the fact that borders shifted after 1918 and therefor reduced their influx to the town, the following question remains: What happened to the now redundant workforce of these Slovene servants? Newspapers in the 1920s provided very specific answers to this issue, and among the possible new destinations specifically established Zagreb and Belgrade. For instance, *Jutro* wrote in 1929: “As they [servants] once flooded Trieste’s ’Fordo Coroneo’, so do they now flock to the Kalemegdan in Belgrade every Sunday afternoon.”⁴¹

As the capital of the newly formed Kingdom of SCS Belgrade consolidated itself an important political, economic and administrative center after the first world war. Therefore, it also attracted Slovene-speaking workers,⁴² among them Slovene domestic servants.⁴³ As contemporary newspapers suggest, Slovene servants were well paid in Belgrade.⁴⁴ However, the motives for their high employability in the Yugoslav capital were not only economic in nature, but – again, if one is to believe the press at the time – also cultural. As for instance in Italian towns, the myth about clean, honest, disciplined, god-fearing Slovene servant prevailed also in Belgrade.⁴⁵ Moreover, some of them moved together with their Slovene employers who worked in the capital as professionals, government officials, etc. The promise of earnings especially during the economic crisis coupled with high unemployment at home attracted an even larger number of young Slovene women in the thirties.

The considerable number of Slovene servants in Belgrade as well as fears about their moral decline and unscrupulous exploitation in this non-slovene and non-Catholic environment,⁴⁶ motivated the start of various organizational activities.⁴⁷ For instance, a catholically oriented association of Slovene servants already gained traction in Belgrade in 1920 under the name Savez služkinja (Servants’ Alliance) (Žvan, 1932, 60–65). Later it even published the monthly *Naše ognjišče* (1930) (Ratej, 2014, 374).⁴⁸

Going on several remarks in the newspapers at the time, Slovene servants were also attracted to the Croatian Zagreb *en masse* in the period between the two world wars, not just Belgrade. In 1930, between 25,000 and 30,000 Slovene immigrants

41 *Jutro*, 1. 12. 1929: Pismo iz Beograda, 12.

42 *Slovenec*, 1. 1. 1939: Slovenci v Beogradu in še dalje na jugu. Deset tisoč Slovencev v Beogradu misli na svoj dom, 5.

43 *Slovenec*, 1. 1. 1936: Iz naše diaspore, Naše ognjišče, 23.

44 *Slovenec*, 20. 11. 1930: Slovenska dekleta v Beogradu. Kako delajo in skrbe za svoje rojakinje, 3.

45 *Jutro*, 1. 12. 1929: Pismo iz Beograda, 12.

46 *Naše Ognjišče*, september 1931: Dekletom tam doma, 7.

47 There was a well-organized shelter for women in Belgrade run by a Slovene, Alojzija Štebi, which was pointed out by the *Gospodinjska pomočnica* in 1937. Cf. *Gospodinjska pomočnica*, VII, 7, 1937: Žensko zavetišče v Beogradu, 49–50.

48 Cf. more on this topic: Cergol Paradiž & Testen Koren, 2021a.

lived there. They constituted one seventh of the population, and, according to the Croats, “all the maids, all the servants and all the waiters in Zagreb were Slovenes.”⁴⁹ Therefore, it is not surprising that several Slovene catholic organizations, that were situated in Zagreb, directed at least to some extent their (charitable) efforts to servants.

Slovene servants also moved to various other larger Yugoslav cities in the period between the two world wars, for example to Skopje (*Izseljeniški vestnik*, III, 5, 1933, 5) and Sarajevo, etc., where again could found support of slovene (catholic) organizations (*Slovenec*, 25. 10. 1925, 5).⁵⁰

The mass exodus of Slovene servants to the south of Yugoslavia raises the issue of their employment opportunities at home, that is in major Slovene cities, especially in Ljubljana. After the first war, as the Slovenes’ political and economic capital within the Kingdom of SCS, Ljubljana gained prominence. However, the number of servants in the city increased only slightly. The percentage of households with servants indicates that there were no significant changes compared to the period before the war, since there were 42% households with servants in 1910⁵¹ and 44% households with servants in 1921 in the same area.⁵²

Nonetheless, in the years that followed, the number of servants in Ljubljana was quite substantial. According to the statistical data of the District Office in Ljubljana and its surroundings, there were 8,400 servants in the Drava Banate in December 1933, and Ljubljana was supposed to have employed 3,500 of them.⁵³ In addition, servants were relatively well organized in the city. There were several professional and educational organizations with activities partially or entirely dedicated to servants that had different political orientations/affiliations.

Another issue arises regarding Ljubljana and its servants. Due to the pressure of Italianization, the period after the First World War saw many Slovene-oriented inhabitants of the former Austrian Littoral relocate from the Julian March to Ljubljana and the wider Kingdom of SCS. However, the afore mentioned political changes did not have any impact on the servant structure in the city.

49 *Koledar Družbe sv. Mohorja*, 1930, 36. According to the 1931 census, 17,627 people in Zagreb spoke Slovene as their mother tongue. There were in fact many more Slovenes. Once the people from the Littoral are added to the account, the number is about 20,000. The vast majority of them were from the Drava Banate. See also: Kolar, 1995, 116; *Slovenec*, 24. 2. 1935: Slovenci v Zagrebu, 3. More on the topic of Slovenes in Zagreb: Kržišnik-Bukić, 1995, 147.

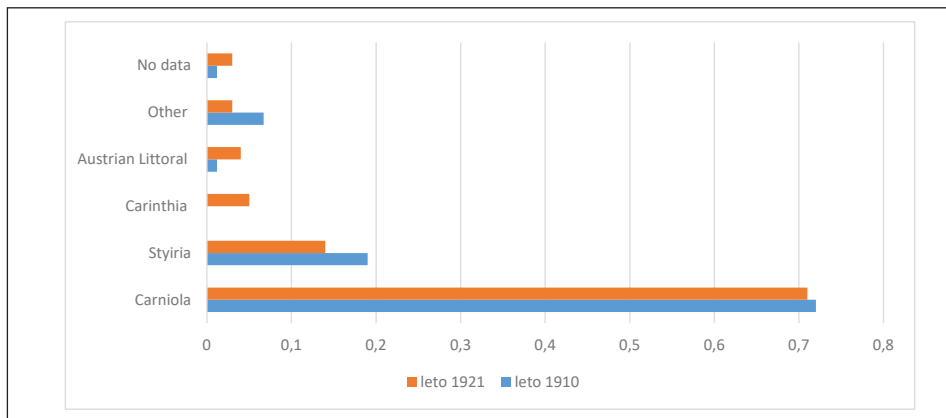
50 *Izseljeniški vestnik*, IV, 2, 1934: Srb za naša slovenska dekleta, 1.

51 According to data collected by Andrej Studen (1995, 176–181, 188–189) for the Census 1910 (Stari trg, Gosposka ulica, Franca Jožefa cesta).

52 Data derived from our own calculations based on census sheets from 1921 for Ljubljana (Stari trg, Gosposka ulica, Franca Jožefa cesta). *Popisi prebivalstva*, that are available on www.sistory.si.

53 According to statistical data, there was 3,650 servant personnel in Ljubljana. This number also incorporates male domestic personnel and women, who worked in households daily, the latter being few in number. Minka Kroft (1888–1954), Slovene women’s movement activist and publisher, estimates that 100 to 200 personnel should be subtracted, leading us to arrive at 3,500 servant personnel in Ljubljana. See: *Gospodinjska pomočnica*, IV, 4, 1934: Pomen in moč skupnosti, 40.

Graph 2: Ljubljana's servants by place of birth 1910, 1921 (in %); Stari trg, Gosposka ulica, Franca Jožefa cesta (Studen, 1995; www.sistory.si).



Similarly, as in the period before the war, the majority of servants working in Ljubljana during the 1921 population census were born in Carniola (71%); 14% of them were born in Styria, 5% in Carinthia, 4% in the Littoral and 3% elsewhere. The data thus indicates that, contrary to expectations, a relatively small number of servants from the Littoral worked in Ljubljana in 1921 and their percentage underwent only a slight increase in comparison with that of 1910 (from 2% to 4%) (Graph 2). With respect to the available data, it is therefore possible to assume that former servants from the Littoral did not join the wave of (political) migrants from Trieste to Ljubljana *en masse*, or if they did, they did not seek employment as servants, but chose other professions. As sources suggest, some workers who were born in the Austrian Littoral and worked as servants in Trieste before the First World War sought employment after the war in the Ljubljana's tobacco factory, for example.⁵⁴ This data corresponds to the otherwise general, global trend of former servants shifting to industrial plants or doing public works which had opened up after the First World War.

However, it is imperative not to forget the trends that dramatically reduce the amount of regular work available to women during and after the economic crisis in the 1930s, a time when income had dropped significantly and unemployment remained high. Nevertheless, according to data provided by *Gospodinjaska pomočnica* in June 1935, a third of households in Ljubljana (4,034 out of 12,816) still employed servants, while others either managed without them or employed day-after-day help, depending on the need of each household. The quoted narrative at hand highlights the economic circumstances that forced all young women including “a teacher with a high school diploma, sales associates, girls with a completed four-grade middle-class school, seamstresses, knitters, field

54 SI ZAL, LJU 134, t. e. 1 (delavske knjižice).

workers and factory workers”⁵⁵ to see the solution in working as servants. The increasing employment of women from the lower middle class as domestic servants and the significantly reduced share of those who stayed in the same household for several years (only up to 55% of servants stayed with the same family for a year or more) both attest to the crisis and gradual transformation of this segment of the workforce. Is this the reason why migration routes “to the south” remained frequent despite the burning issue of general unemployment there as well?

After the First World war, however, the migration paths of Slovene servants stretched also beyond the Kingdom of SCS or the Kingdom of Italy. Despite the fact that the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian empire certainly diminished such possibilities, there are evidences, that a quite considerable number of Slovenian women still worked as servants in Austrian towns (Klagenfurt, Vienna,⁵⁶ Graz⁵⁷). Their paths lead them also to more remote countries especially to Alexandria, but also to France (Paris, Lille, etc.),⁵⁸ England,⁵⁹ Belgium and even Spain or Albania⁶⁰. They even traveled further, as in Uruguay in South America. Many girls joined their significant others who went to the US, Westphalia in Germany, Argentina and Australia. Yet, unlike the men, they mostly lacked their own professional organizations.

THOSE WHO REMAINED

The archival material from Archivio di Stato di Trieste reveals the following story: Anna Zupancich worked as a servant for Alice Ditz in Trieste for two and half years. In July 1920, she used her time off to visit her family in the vicinity of Ljubljana. Owing to the nature of her work but also due to movement restrictions during wartime, she is believed not to have seen her family for several years. She asked for permission to return to her post after her time off was concluded. Mrs. Ditz vouched for her in a letter dated August 21, 1920, emphasizing that Anna Zupancich was trustworthy since she had worked as a servant in Trieste for more than two decades.⁶¹

The case of Anna Zupancich attests to some of the problems faced by servants who moved to Trieste before the war in search of income and remained in the city even after the state border separated their birthplace from the city where they may have lived and worked for a long time. In the post-war period, they encountered major obstacles in visiting family members and even greater obstacles in returning to work, and the approval of their application depended on the favor of their employers and city authorities.

55 *Gospodinjska pomočnica*, V, 6, 1935: Gospodinja in gospodinjska pomočnica, 42.

56 *Gospodinjska pomočnica*, I, 4, 1931: Kako so gospodinjske pomočnice organizirane drugod, 41–43.

57 *Koroški Slovenec*, VII, 4. 5. 1927: Celovec, 3.

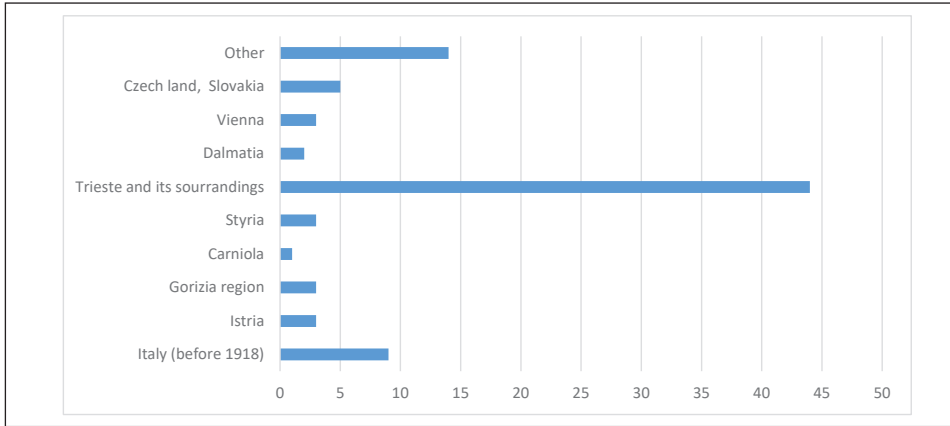
58 Francija, in: *Koledar družbe sv. Mohorja*, 1935, 60.

59 *Izseljenski vestnik Rafael. Glasilo Družbe sv. Rafaela v Ljubljani*, V, 5, 1935: Slovenska dekleta za Anglijo, 5; *Gospodinjska pomočnica*, IX, 6–7, 1939: Slovenska dekleta za Anglijo, 45, 54; *Gospodinjska pomočnica*, IX, 8, 1939: Darinka Vdovič, Dekleta, ki odhajajo v tujino, 57–59.

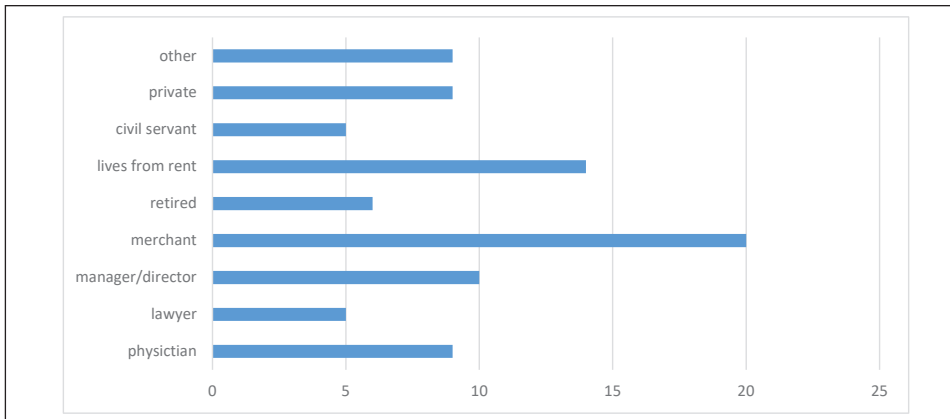
60 *Gospodinjska pomočnica*, IX, 6, 1939: Slovenke v Albaniji, 43–45.

61 ASTs, RCGC Gab., b. 87, Passaporti.

Graph 3: Masters of servants, born in lands that became a part of the Kingdom of SCS or Austria after WWI (place of birth), 1921 (AGT, Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1921, b. 41–42, 44–48, 52–53).



Graph 4: Masters of servants, born in lands that became a part of the Kingdom of SCS or Austria after WWI (profession), 1921 (AGT, Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1921, b. 41–42, 44–48, 52–53).



According to census data, a significant number of servants found themselves in a similar situation to Anna Zupancich. 96 servants (17%) in the sample from 1921 were born in places that did not belong to the Kingdom of Italy after the war, but to Yugoslavia or Austria. In the sample of 1930, there are still 30 such servants (8,2%). It is worth emphasizing that the mentioned group of servants from 1921 had a particular demographic profile. Compared to the entire sample of servants from the year 1921 they were a great deal older; namely, their

mean age was 36,5. We have reliable data that many of them had been residing in Trieste for a longer period. Thus, they do not correspond to the profile of *life-cycle servants* which was typical for others in the sample and also held true for the Carniolan servants in Trieste before the war. Instead, they fit the profile of *life-long servants*, as this group consisted of elderly, unmarried servants who might have become permanent residents of Trieste and did not intend to return to their places of origin (Hajnal, 1983; Laslett, 1977 and 1983; Mitterauer, 1990, etc).

Graph 5: Servants, born in lands that had become a part of the Kingdom of SCS or Austria after WWI (citizenship), 1921, 1931 (AGT, Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1921, b. 41–42, 44–48, 52–53; Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1931, b. 211, 213, 215, 217, 223–224, 237, 239, 243, 246, 249, 252, 255, 259, 263, 269, 270, 272, 277, 283, 286, 291, 293, 298, 303–307, 313–315).

	1921	1930
Yugoslav citizenship	42	14
Austrian citizenship	31	4
opted for Italian citizenship	6	0
granted Italian citizenship	0	10
unknown	12	0
granted Italian citizenship as wives or widows of Italian men	5	2

Employers of this specific group of servants were also usually individuals from older generations (mean age 55,8) who quite often lived off annuities (14) or received pensions (6) (Graph 4). However, contrary to our expectations, they did not include a significant number of individuals who themselves also originated from the countries of the former Austria-Hungary that were annexed to the Kingdom of SCS after the First World War or Austria. Instead, more than half (44 of 87) were born in Trieste, and nine even came from places that had belonged to Italy even before the war (Graph 3). This means that, despite the long-standing public political drive against such national intermingling, there was certainly a number of households with heads who spoke Italian and employed servants who did not just originate from the Slovene/Yugoslav speaking environment, but often actually became foreign citizens after 1918, which is another peculiarity of this specific group of women in the sample. If once again the sample from 1921 is taken into account the numbers are as follows: out of a total of 96 servants born in areas that were included in the Kingdom of SCS or Austria after the war, as many as 42 women held Yugoslav and 31 Austrian citizenship, 6 women opted for Italian citizenship, the status of 12 servants is unknown or unclear, and 5 servants were granted Italian citizenship as wives or widows of Italian men (Graph 5).

Graph 6: Residents of Trieste (sample for Borgo Teresiano) in relation to citizenship status, 1921 (N=7047) (AGT, *Censimento della popolazione, Trieste 1921*, b. 41–42, 44–48, 52–53).

	Citizens <i>ipso facto</i>	Citizens <i>ipso facto</i> (in %)	Italian citizenship by option or election	Italian citizen- ship by option or election (in %)	Foreign citizenship	Foreign citizen- ship (in %)
all residents	5783	82%	695	9,90%	569	8,10%
men	2505	82%	336	11%	216	7%
women	3278	82%	359	10%	353	8%
servants	490	77%	18	4%	114	19%

The high proportion of foreign citizens among servants is the consequence of several complex reasons. Firstly, women's status and citizenship in the post-war period was an extremely delicate legal issue. Legal codes, including the Italian Legal Code of 1863, mostly stipulated that a married woman obtained her husbands' citizenship; on the other hand, no specific course of action was stipulated for an unmarried woman or her status was contingent upon that of her father (*pater familias*). Secondly, the peace treaties relating to the Successor States of the ex-Austro-Hungarian Empire did not include satisfactory criteria to determine citizenship. (Where the Versailles, Neuilly, and Lausanne Treaties for the *ipso facto* acquisition of nationality – lay down, in the first instance, the principles of *Habitual Residence* or *Ordinary Residence*, the Treaties relating to the Successor States of the ex-Austro-Hungarian Empire usually supplant that principle by that of Rights of Citizenship {*Heimatsrecht, Indigenat, Pertinenza*}). Adherence to the *Heimatsrecht* principle in peace treaties led to several cases where individuals did not acquire citizenship or had dual citizenship, however, even more common were cases where individuals were assigned incorrect or contested citizenship. In areas annexed to Italy, several pre-war Italian laws were also complied with when regulating citizenship status, in addition to the provisions of post-war peace treaties and agreements.

The complex and vague instructions were difficult to put into practice in the multi-ethnic area of the former Austrian Littoral or more specifically Trieste. As can be seen in Graph 6, this does not hold true only for servants but for other segments of Trieste's population as well. In a sample of 7,047 residents, there were only 5,783 (82%) of those who obtained Italian citizenship *ipso facto*, i.e. automatically, 695 (9,9%) opted for Italian citizenship and 569 (8,1%) were at the time (in 1921) without Italian citizenship.⁶²

However, among servants, the proportion of those who did not gain or did not even opt for Italian citizenship is bigger. In fact, only 4% of servants opted for Italian citizenship, and as many as 19% of servants lived with foreign citizenship in the city.

62 Among the latter, 31% were citizens of the Kingdom of SCS, 16% were Austrian citizens, 14% were Greek, etc.

Moreover, a decade later, in 1930, the share of foreign (especially Yugoslav or for instance Austrian) citizens among them was still significant (11,02%). Besides the census data, the applications for Italian citizenship which had been processed by the Prefecture of Trieste in the 1920s, were also reviewed for the purpose of this study. Again, there were only a few servants among the applicants. The others were teachers, civil servants, prostitutes and women without professions.⁶³

To reconsider, why did Slovene (and also Austrian) servants not regulate their status in Italy? Perhaps some still hoped to return to their place of birth, and the lack of Italian citizenship did not yet represent such an important professional or general life barrier for them as it did for some other social segments of the Trieste population. One should also consider the scope of the relationships within households, where these servants were most likely not merely employed, but had also established more lasting and emotionally engaged relationships over the years. Did this kind of emotional capital help them where laws proved themselves inadequate, based on the assumption the emotions in the families where they served were mutual?

The fact remains that the usefulness of possessing civil rights to some extent depends on the success of exercising one's social and labor rights in a given environment, and the Kingdom of Italy was generally late in recognizing such rights for servants. Initiatives for the protection of servants, led by philanthropic or trade union organizations and individual lawyers, as was the case in the past in Austria-Hungary or later in Yugoslavia, were stymied by Italian political decision-makers due to the already exposed unclear position of servants' profession as situated on a crossroads between the public and private sphere. They did not include servants in laws that regulated, for example, child labor or maternity leave, nor did they legally restrict their work schedule just like they did not protect them in case of unemployment. In 1923, servants were given compulsory health and disability insurance which was extended to tuberculosis in 1927.⁶⁴ But only the 1942 Civil Code introduced the first significant changes for the better; the rest came down to post-war legislature (Sarti, 2010, 37–47).

It was only with the gradual acquisition of labor and social rights, that foreign-born servants also became aware of the benefits of regulating their status. The case of a Yugoslav citizen, a woman who complained about this issue in the Slovene newspaper *Primorski dnevnik* in 1950 is very significant. She had moved to Trieste from Carniola before the First World War, where she worked as a servant until after Second World War. As she previously possessed *Heimatsrecht*, *Pertinenza* in Carniola, she was automatically granted Yugoslav citizenship after 1918, which then prevented her from obtaining Italian pension insurance in the second post-war period. As she herself wrote: "I have been living in Trieste for 40 years, I was born in Slovenia, near Ljubljana, I

63 ASTs, Prefettura Ts, Cittadinanza, b. 4371, 4372, 4373.

64 It is precisely this kind of documentation that helped former Slovene servants from the Italo-Slovene border area (now Yugoslav residents) receive an Italian pension following the Second World War even if they lack of legal documents (work contracts). Acquiring the necessary documents still proved difficult for many women.

did not opt in after the first war, I would like to have all my rights here in Trieste. If you consider my case, you will help many older servants.”⁶⁵ Her request was followed by detailed legal advice on how she could arrange for citizenship.

Similar obstacles were encountered immediately in the first post-war period by many servants who had remained in Austria after 1918, and who previously had *Heimatsrecht*, *Pertinenza* in other successor states of Austria-Hungary. The *Inlandarbeiterschutzgesetz* which was adopted by the Austrian authorities in 1925 and also concerned domestic servants, restricted the employment opportunities of foreign nationals and citizens in terms of their entitlement to benefit from the social insurance system and to work-related rights and legal protection. According to Jessica Richter, “the non-Austrian citizens targeted by the law included those who had received the citizenship of other successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy” (Richter, 2015, 486).

CONCLUSION

Post-war transition periods have always a long-term impact on women’s identities and their work possibilities. As was already highlighted in the introduction, they can accentuate their traditional invisibility, exclusion and marginalization, but at the same time they also may facilitate their inclusion and empowerment. However, different occupational profiles/social categories of women are affected differently by post-war changes. The paper focuses on domestic servants. As many researchers in the last two or three decades concluded, it is key to utilize the so-called “longer historical perspective” in order to gain better insight into the (contemporary) phenomenon of domestic labor. Moreover, *macro*-, *meso*- and *micro*-regions usually retain their specifics (Hoerder, 2015, 105). Thought that past experiences, patterns and models from different geographic areas all make an important contribution not only to the interpretation itself, but also to the attempts of addressing the (global) challenges of domestic work throughout time

Mod. O. 1.

ISTITUTO NAZIONALE FASCISTA DELLA PREVIDENZA SOCIALE

ASSICURAZIONI OBBLIGATORIE
invalidità e vecchiaia, disoccupazione, tubercolosi e maternità

ASSICURATO N. 187899 Prov. MILANO
TESSERA N. U. E.

Bollo dell'ufficio che rilascia la tessera e data N. P. S. 14 SET. 1939
Data di annullamento della prima marca (Questo dato deve essere apposta dal datore di lavoro quando sparisce la prima marca) 15 Ottobre 1939
SEDE DI MILANO

Cognome Ferletič
(per le donne maritate si aggiunge, dopo il cognome del marito, quello da ragazza)

nome Milena paternità Leopoldo

nato il 15.11.918

nel comune di Verstoiba

professione

L'assegnazione del numero distintivo dell'assicurato viene disposta dagli uffici incaricati della emissione o del ritiro e della rinnovazione della prima tessera.

L'assicurato, qualora venga interrotto o cessi il rapporto assicurativo può conseguire, purché possa far valere contributi obbligatori per almeno 48 settimane, i diritti derivanti dalle assicurazioni obbligatorie per l'invalidità e la vecchiaia e per le tubercolosi.

A tale effetto egli deve chiedere all'Istituto, non oltre cinque anni dalla data dell'ultimo contributo obbligatorio, l'autorizzazione a proseguire volontariamente il versamento dei contributi nelle assicurazioni predette.

I versamenti volontari sono equiparati per tutti gli effetti a quelli obbligatori.

Fig. 1: The Servants’ Employment Booklet from Milena Ferletič while she was working in Milan (notice the disability insurance, health insurance and tuberculosis papers) (Renato Podbersič’s private archive).

65 *Primorski dnevnik*, 11. 8. 1950: Fortunat Mikuletič, O državljanstvu, 2.

(Yeates, 2005, 12). For the purpose of this study, Slovene servants in Trieste after the First World War were taken into account and their migration routes were studied. Important questions are brought up in this Italo-Slovene border area, such as that of citizenship and social rights, national belonging, work opportunities, the dynamics of a market operating according to the principle of supply and demand, adjustment to altered living conditions, etc. Precisely in this *micro* (Trst) and *meso* environment (NE Adriatic Region in global context) of the study at hand, it was particularly necessary to analyze how post-war emergence of new countries and their borders interfered with the established migration flows of Slovene servants. In addition to the changed geopolitical reality of the area itself with all the administrative problems that such changes bring, Slovenian servants also faced the deterioration of the economic situation and the radicalization of anti-Slovenian border fascism, which affected them heavily, too. In attempt to answer the main research question of how the status and work possibilities of Slovene women servants in Trieste changed after WWI, it was important to understand the continuities, but also to detect and emphasize discontinuities that affected the servants' work in this area. In doing so, there were some observations which proved to be important. Slovene servants – in some respects a politically important population category before the First World War – became invisible after the war. However, this (political) invisibility did not affect their economic relevance much. Juxtaposed with other female occupational groups, Slovene servants had still the possibility to work and survive in Trieste's environment. To a certain extent they were allowed to speak, act and live as Slovenes. Slovene servants in Trieste were therefore caught in an inclusion-exclusion paradox.

State borders (and even imagined ones that divide nations, neighbours and fellow human beings) have changed several times in NE Adriatic region, both in their permeability and location throughout the 20th century; after the First, the Second World War and in a certain manner, also in the 90s. The ways in which these administrative, social, cultural as well as other obstacles have been overcome by Slovenian servants offer a deeper insight into this occupational profile of women, as well as their survival strategies and choices that have been given to them by living along the state border. Therefore, the present microstudy is a fragment, but at the same time a foundation for more in-depth understanding of the dynamics of this professional profile in a given space and time.

IZKLJUČENE MED IZKLJUČENIMI? TRST/TRIESTE IN (SLOVENSKE) SLUŽKINJE PO PRVI SVETOVNI VOJNI

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POVZETEK

Slovenske služkinje so pred prvo svetovno vojno v Trstu zaradi svoje številčnosti predstavljale pomembno politično kategorijo. Prispevek naslavlja vprašanje, kako so politične spremembe po letu 1918, ko je mesto pripadlo Italiji – denimo večji del Kranjske, od koder so slovenske služkinje poprej množično migrirale, pa Kraljevini SHS –, vplivale na njihovo številčno razmerje v mestu in kako se je ob pritisku italijanizacije spremenil njihov družbeni položaj. Analiza vzorca popisnih pol iz tržaške premožne terezijanske četrti potrjuje tudi v takratnem časopisju izraženo domnevo, da se je število služkinj po vojni v primerjavi s predvojnim obdobjem zmanjšalo. Še posebej se je zmanjšal delež slovenskih služkinj, rojenih na Kranjskem, Štajerskem in Koroškem, po drugi strani pa se je povečal delež služkinj, rojenih v krajih, ki so že pred vojno pripadali Italiji. K temu so poleg na novo vzpostavljene meje pripomogli tudi neposredni ukrepi italijanskih oblasti, ki so spodbujale preseljevanje italijanskih služkinj in načrtno omejevale priseljevanje slovenskih služkinj. Številne slovenske služkinje, še posebej tiste iz neposrednega priselivitvenega bazena in nekoliko bolj oddaljene Goriške, so kljub spremenjenim družbeno-političnim razmeram (gospodarska kriza, fašizem) po prvi svetovni vojni še prihajale v Trst. Tekom dvajsetih let 20. stoletja so se soočale s šovinističnimi in rasno zaznamovanimi napadi v javnem prostoru (časopisje, tržnica, trgovine) in na delovnem mestu. Kljub temu so v mestu našle organizacijsko podporo in so, ko sta bila v poznih dvajsetih letih prepovedana tako slovenska beseda kot slovenska društva, pod okriljem RKC, predvsem Marijine družbe, ohranjale svojo slovensko identiteto ter podporno mrežo. Tudi italijanske služkinje se so v istem obdobju v Trstu lahko oprle na nekatere pobude italijanskih ženskih društev. V nadaljevanju je pozornost usmerjena na tiste slovenske služkinje, ki so zaradi spremenjenih povojnih razmer znotraj nove domovine Italije preusmerile svoje migracijske poti. Veliko se jih je zaradi boljših delovnih pogojev in tudi manjšega pritiska »obmejnega fašizma«, podobno kot to velja za nemško govoreče tirolske služkinje, usmerilo v severno italijanska mesta, predvsem Milan. Slovenske služkinje, živeče v okvirih novoustanovljene Kraljevine SHS, pa so se – poleg migracij »na tuje« – vse bolj množično začele seliti tudi v Zagreb ali Beograd. V Ljubljani, novo osnovani prestolnici Slovencev,

je njihovo število takoj po vojni le rahlo narastlo, a se je s porastom v tridesetih letih mesto kmalu ponašalo z živahno društveno dejavnostjo v njihovo korist. S posebnimi težavami so se spopadale slovenske služkinje, rojene v krajih, ki so po vojni pripadali Kraljevini SHS, vendar so v Trst prišle že pred vojno in v mestu ostale tudi po njej. Popisni podatki kažejo, da jih je znatno število živelo v mestu brez italijanskega državljanstva. Nekatere so svoj status poskušale urediti šele po drugi svetovni vojni.

Ključne besede: služkinje, Trst, povojna tranzicija, zgodovina spolov, popis prebivalstva, migracije, državljanstvo

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