

THE ROLE OF THE BORDER REGION OF THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC IN ITALY, CROATIA AND SLOVENIA IN THE PAST AND IN THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the role of the border region of the northern Adriatic in Italy, Croatia, and Slovenia in the past and in the process of European integration. The discussion covers the geopolitical situation of the region in the past and the present; the changes of borders in the region; the changes in the political status of the region; the changes in ethnic structure; and the special economic role of the region related to its position as a border region. In the conclusion, the future of the region with special emphasis on the consequences of Slovenia's joining the European Union is considered.

Key words: northern Adriatic, history of the political changes of borders

The northern Adriatic Sea reaches deeply into the European continent. The important ports of Trieste (=Trst; =Triest), Rijeka (=Fiume), and later Koper (=Capodistria) had therefore developed in the gulfs of Kvarner (=Golfo d' Carnero), Trieste, and Piran (=Pirano) as early as the Middle Ages. Because of their excellent geopolitical situation, these ports serve regions very far across the Alps and across the Pannonian Plain as far east as Ukraine. (Černe, Pelc, 1990, 209-214).

Also because of its geopolitical situation, this region played an important role in military, economic, and political affairs from the period of the Roman Empire onwards. Powerful nations fought for control over this region where Romance, Germanic, and Slav peoples bordered each other, and many different states developed here. Wars between powerful nations to gain and maintain control over the region were an inevitable part

the region's history, and many frontier changes occurred as a result. Another result was forced and voluntary mass migrations. Throughout its history, smaller ethnic groups in particular hoped to achieve political independence by creating their own states.

During the Middle Ages, relatively small city-states developed, among which the most important regional power was Venice. After its collapse, the majority of the region was ruled by the Austrian Habsburgs, the only masters of the region until the first half of the 19th century. In the process of "risorgimento," the unification of Italy, most of the regions of the Po Plains became part of Italy. However, the "Österreichisch-Illirisches Küstenland" (=Avstrijsko-Illirsko primorje; =Austrian-Illirian Coastland) remained part of Austria until the end of World War I, including the regions of Trieste, Gorizia (=Gorica; =Görz), and Istria (=Istra; =Istria).

The development of changes to state frontiers was very interesting. From the end of the 13th century until the beginning of the 15th century, several wars were fought in the region between the Habsburg Empire and Venice, and as a result there were many changes in the border between the two states. From 1366 on, the Habsburgs controlled the coast of the Adriatic north of Trieste, and Trieste itself became part of their domain in 1382. In that year, the period of the 535-year reign of the Habsburgs in the region began and with it the connection of Trieste with its natural hinterland of Central Europe. After 1521, the frontiers within the region stabilized so that the areas around Gorizia and Trieste and northeastern Istria belonged the Habsburgs while other areas belonged to Venice (HAECE, 1993, 16-19, 23-26).

These borders remained unchanged until 1797 when the French arrived in the region. Their arrival also meant the end of Venice as a separate state entity. The Treaty of Campo Formio gave Austria all the Venetian territories up to the Adige River in the west as well as Venice, Venetian Istria, and Dalmatia to the east. These frontiers remained unchanged until 1805 and the French victory at Austerlitz, and Austria ceded to France all of the territories it had gained with the Treaty of Campo Formio. These territories became part of the Kingdom of Italy created by Napoleon and ruled by his brother. Following the Treaty of Schönbrunn, France also acquired from Austria the whole of Gorizia, Trieste, Carniola (=Kranjska; =Krain), and the western part of Carinthia (=Koroška; =Kärnten). By special decree, Napoleon established the Illyrian Provinces on this territory. Along with these regions, the territory of Croatia south of the Sava River, Istria, Dalmatia, Boka Kotorska, the territory of the Republic of Dubrovnik/Ragusa (which from 1808 had been part of Kingdom of Italy), and from 1810 East Tyrol (=Südtirol) with Lienz also became part of the Illyrian Provinces. The Illyrian Provinces were typical creation of the imperial mentality that did not take into account the ethnic structure of the population. It is worth noting, however, that Napoleon did not automatically annex all of the territories of the Venetian Republic to Italy. It is useful to note that although the new Illyrian Provinces were directly under French rule, their brief existence (1809-1813) subsequently provided the romantic nationalists of the 1830's and 1840's with one of the foundations for the "Illyrian Movement" that called for the uniting of the Southern Slavs (Yugoslavs) in an independent state (HAECE, 1993, 73-75; Rogel, 1994, 6, 7; Bundy, 1987, 687; Senkowska-Gluck, 1980, 55-78; *Les Relations entre la France et les pays yougoslaves du dix-huitième au vingtième siècle*, 1987). The border between Italy and the Illyrian Provinces ran along natural frontiers, that is, along the Soča (=Isonzo) River

and Koritnica Valley to the Predel Pass and along the Rateče Divide so that Fusine di Laghi (=Bela Peč; =Weissenfels) and Tarvisio (=Trbiž; =Tarvis) (which until then had been part of Carniola and Carinthia) became part of the Kingdom of Italy.

After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, most of northern Italy became part of Austria as the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia. This situation lasted until 1859 when Lombardy became part of the Kingdom of Italy; Venetia remained under Austrian rule until 1866 when it was annexed to "United Italy" (Melik, 1978, 5-20).

After the establishment of "United Italy," its border with the Habsburg Monarchy remained unchanged until the end of World War I. It ran west from Aquileia (=Oglej) to Goriška Brda and then to Mt. Matajur/Mataiur (1642 m), Mt. Kanin/Canin (2587 m), Mt. Montaz/lof di Montasio (2573 m), and the Karnijske Alpe/Alpi Carniche mountain range (Valussi, 1972). After World War I, Italy gained substantial territories to the east and north as a reward for its entry into World War I on the side of the Triple Entente. In addition to South Tyrol, Italy gained the whole of Gorizia, Trieste, and Istria, actually acquiring the whole of the former Austrian-Illyrian Coastland. The frontier followed the line of Peč/Forno (1509 m)-Jalovec (2645 m)-Triglav (2864 m)-Bogatin (2005 m)-Črna prst (1844 m)-Porezen (1630 m) across the valleys of Sora Poljansčica and Sora Selščica, the western edge of the settlements of Hotediščica and Planina, and the eastern slopes of Snežnik (1796 m) to a point between Rijeka and Sušak (=Sussag).¹

At the beginning of World War II, the Italian Fascists occupied most of the Yugoslav Slovenia that had existed in the pre-war period. On this territory they established the "Provincia d' Lubiana" that included all of the territories south of the Rapallo frontier from Mt. Peč/Forno to the Sora Poljansčica Valley where its border turned eastward to Polhov Gradec and Katarina (under German rule) and Šentvid nad Ljubljano (German) to the bridge over the Sava River (German). From Zalog pri Ljubljani (Italian), the border went on to the hills beyond Zalog and then straight toward Brežice. After the capitulation of Italy in 1943, the former Italian territories were occupied by Germans who established their "Operationszone Adriatische Küstenland" (=Operacijska cona Jadransko primorje; =Operational Zone Adriatic Coastland) (Harriman, 1977; Rogel, 1994, 17-19; Klanjšček et al., 1977).

In 1945, the Slovene Communist partisans, who had included among their goals as a primary objective the unification of all Slovene ethnic territory into a "United Slovenia," succeeded in militarily occupying all Slovene ethnic regions but subsequently lost Trieste and its sur-

1 Valussi, 1972. Cf. Živojinović, 1972, and Rusinow, 1969, 15-50.

rounding territory at the diplomatic table. Slovenia acquired more than one quarter of its current national territory in the west, the Primorska region (Novak, 1970; Pirjevec, 1995, 199-202), as a result of the struggle by Slovene partisans on the side of the Allied Forces during World War II. The English brigadier and diplomat Fitzroy Maclean, the head of the British Military Mission to the headquarters of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, wrote in his biography of Yugoslav Communist leader Josip Broz Tito: "Nothing that Tito had done since coming to power had endeared him to public opinion in the West. The memory of his brave fight against the common enemy during the war was soon obliterated by the ruthlessly totalitarian tendencies which he was displaying and by the seemingly ever clearer signs that he had always been, and still remained, first and foremost a Soviet agent."

It was from this angle in particular, that the Governments of the Western Powers approached the problem of Trieste when it came up for discussion before the Paris Peace Conference in 1946. In their discussions with the Royal Yugoslav Government during the war the British Government had shown themselves frankly favourable to Yugoslavia's claim to Trieste and the surrounding areas. Nor had they given indication that they intended to oppose it during the various exchanges which they had had on the subject with Tito in 1944. Ethnographically, after all, the Yugoslavs could make out at least as good a case as the Italians. And the Yugoslavs had been Great Britain's allies during the war, while the Italians had been her enemies..." (Maclean, 1957, 337-338).

It is interesting to note that the struggle by the Slovene partisans to annex Slovene Primorska and Trieste gained very wide support among Slovene immigrants in the United States who at the end of 1944 and in the first half of 1945 directed their efforts toward helping resolve border questions and the issue of Trieste and Primorska. They continued their efforts after World War II and succeeded in drawing the attention of state legislatures and the U.S. Congress to the Trieste question through members of Congress (Klemenčič, M., 1987, 279-281). Slovene Americans also turned to the left and to the Soviet Union since they believed the alliance between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union would be helpful in winning Trieste for the Slovenes. The analysts of the American Office of Strategic Services, a predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency, and its special Foreign Nationalities branch also dealt extensively with the issue of the

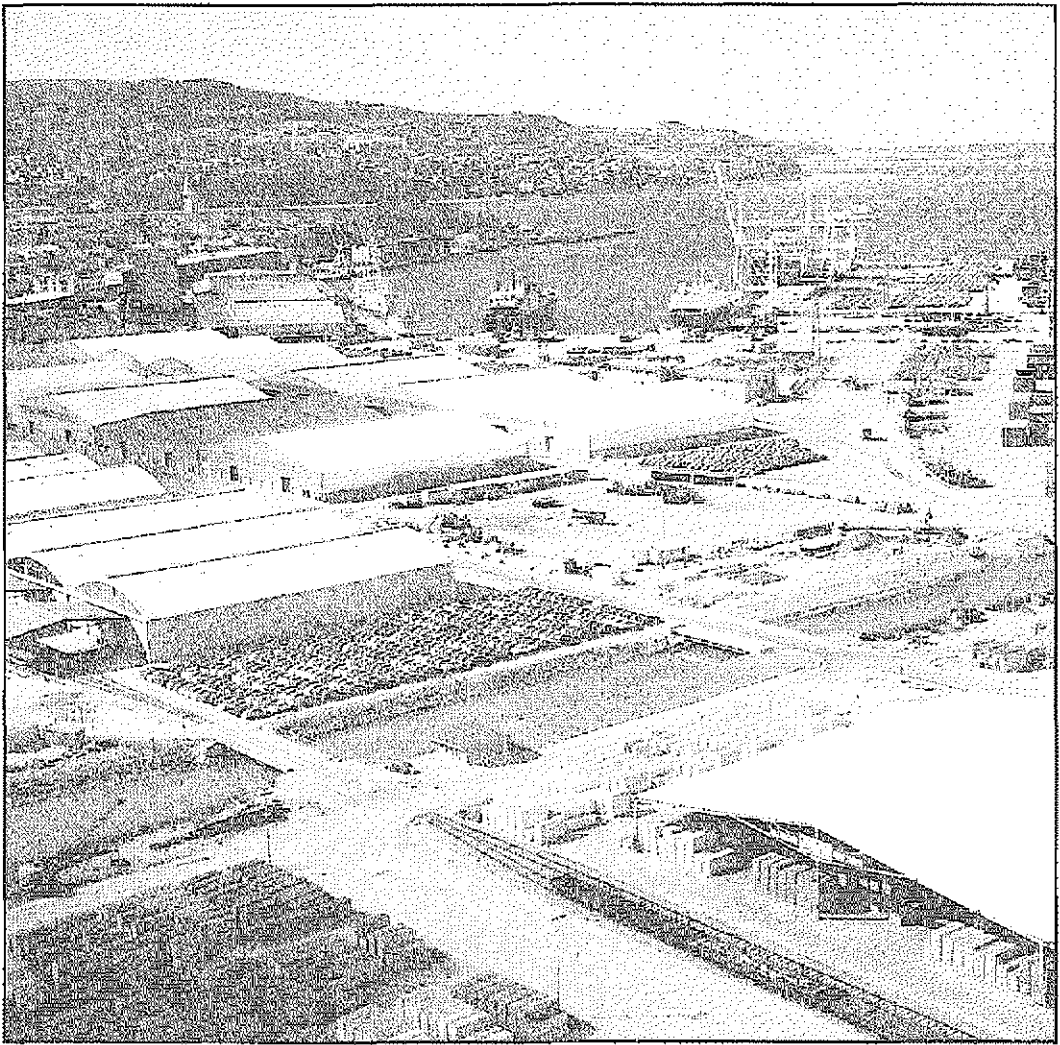
political leanings of American Slovenes toward Moscow in the hope that Moscow would help Slovenes gain Trieste. We found about three hundred pages of material on this issue in the archives of the American Office of Strategic Services' Foreign Nationalities branch.

The analysts of the OSS Foreign Nationalities branch concluded the "Liberal and leftist Slovenes here /in America/, no less than the conservatives, have felt the need of maintaining a continued defense of their support of a pro-Soviet Yugoslavia. The burden of their recent utterances has been to show that Slovene Catholics participated in the Yugoslav liberation movement and that the Movement itself is broadly representative and not "purely Communistic". Moreover, it was asserted that one of the principal aims of the Movement was the incorporation of Trieste in Slovene national territory (NAUS-OSS-FLD, No. B-353, 10 May, 1945, Slovenes turn to Moscow).

On May 16, 1945, *Ameriška domovina*, a conservative Slovene-American newspaper, blamed Moscow for Tito's actions in trying to solve the question of Trieste behind the backs of the Allies. *Ameriška domovina* prophesied that "if Yugoslavia loses Trieste, the Communist government of Yugoslavia will be to blame as well as all those Slovene-American fellow travellers who so enthusiastically applauded all that Tito started..." (Tako se ne gradi temeljev za mir, *Ameriška domovina*, 1945).

The United Committee of South Slavic Americans published the thirty-page pamphlet *Trieste* by A.J.P. Taylor of Magdalen College, Oxford in which the author established the Slovene rights to the city (NAUS-OSS-FLD, No. B-400, 29. September, 1945). In 1944, the United Committee published an article by Dr. Josip Smodlaka on the question of Trieste and distributed 25,000 copies (Smodlaka, Tito, Barbalich, 1944). Between 1945 and 1954, Slovene Americans sent many letters to American government officials on the question of Trieste. The actions of the left wing Slovene Americans and other Americans with roots in Yugoslavia were coordinated with the Yugoslav authorities. Demonstrations had to be prepared carefully due to the fact that there were several million Italians living in the United States who could organize counterdemonstrations at any time (Adamic, 1981a; Adamic, 1981b). The objective historian must admit that one reason for the American administration's position on the Trieste question can be found in the importance of the Italian-American vote in the next elections.²

2 In the archives of OSS, Foreign Language Division we found reports on activities of the Italian Americans. (further quoted as NAUS-OSS-FLD, Memorandum by the Foreign Nationalities Branch to the Director of Strategic Services, no. B-328, 12 March, 1945, Italian Americans on Yalta; NAUS-OSS-FLD, Memorandum by the Foreign Nationalities Branch to the Director of Strategic Services, no. B-345, 6. April, 1945, Italian Americans organize to demand allied status for Italy; NAUS-OSS-FLD, Memorandum by the Foreign Nationalities Branch to the Director of Strategic Services, no. B-322, 5. March, 1945, Yugoslav Border Question Flares Anew among Italian Americans; NAUS-OSS-FLD, Memorandum by the Foreign Nationalities Branch to the Director of Strategic Services, no. N-179, 24 January, 1945, The itaio-Yugoslav Border Problems in the Italian Language Press.

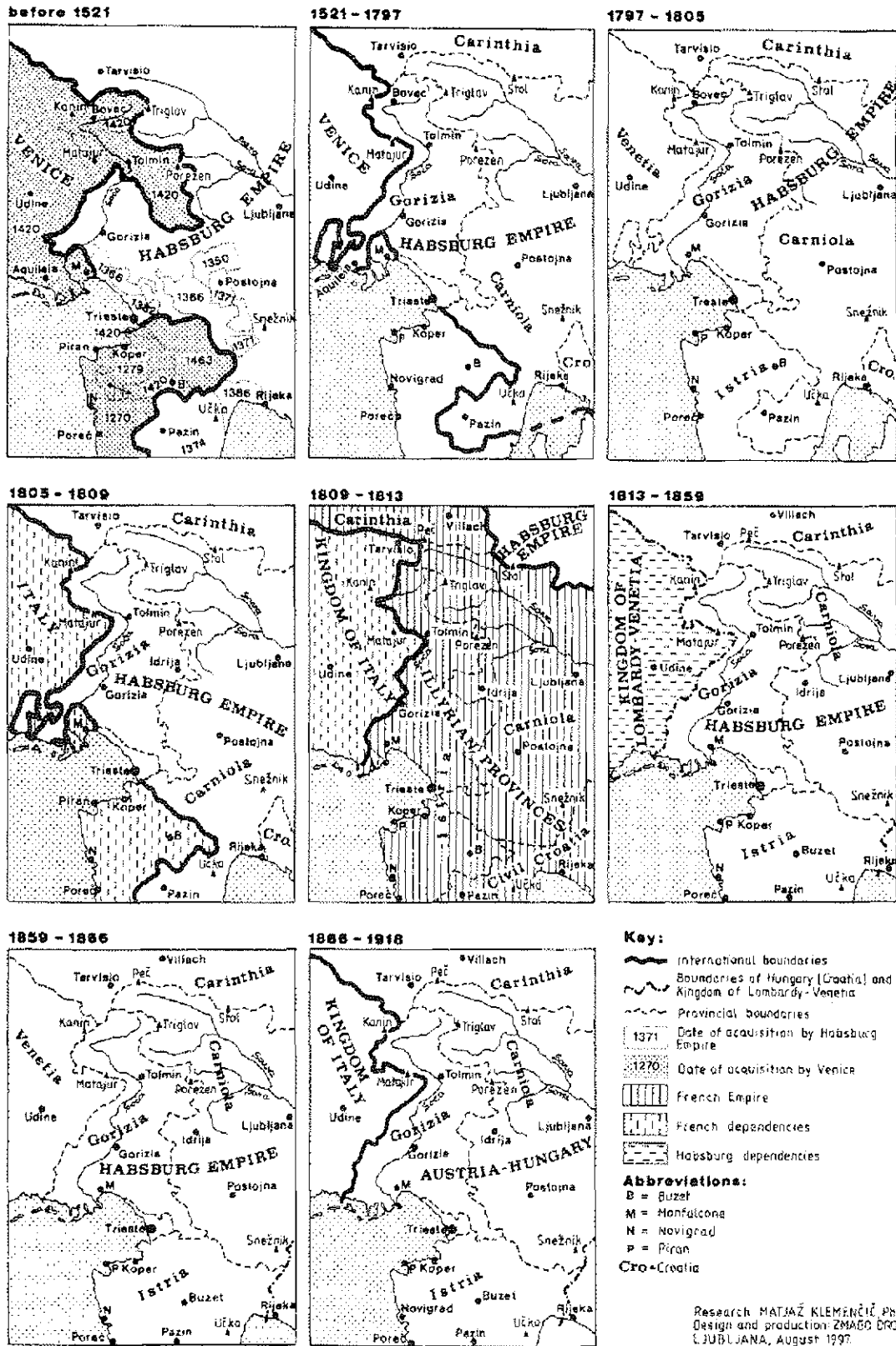


*Port of Koper (Archives - Port of Koper).
Luka Koper.*

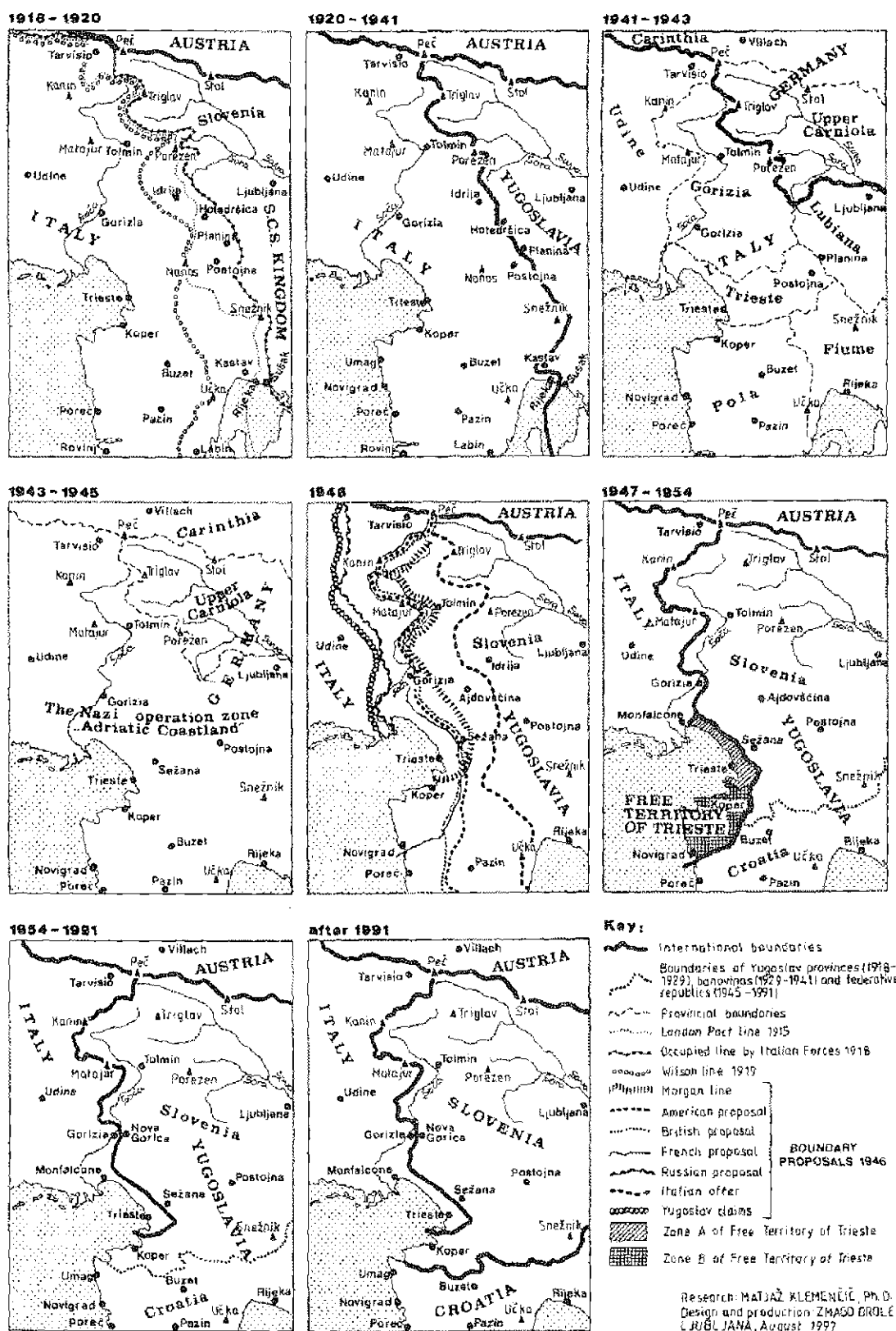
Until 1954, the disputed area of the Free Territory of Trieste was divided into Zone B controlled by Yugoslavia and Zone A that had been under the Anglo-American military administration but was soon transferred by the Allies to the Italians. The FTT was never meant to be a buffer zone between Italy and Yugoslavia. During the first years following World War II, Europe felt the Iron Curtain fall from Szczecin to Trieste. Since Yugoslavia was a main ally of the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1948, the Slovene demands were never fulfilled. The Ossimo Agreement of 1974 finalized the border between Italy and Yugoslavia (Slovenija, Italija, Slovenija, Italy, 1996, 74-79).

New changes occurred in the territory of Yugoslavia in 1991 when new independent countries were established. In the region under discussion, the countries of Slovenia and Croatia came into being. This survey of frontier changes and the establishment of new states

clearly demonstrates that the major powers could not care less about the wishes of the peoples who live in such regions or about their ethnic makeup. This fact also applies for the Northern Adriatic region where five autochthonous ethnic groups live: Slovenes, Italians, Germans, Croats, and Friulians (counted as a separate ethnic group after World War II). According to the Austrian census taken in 1910 based on language of communication, within the post-1919 Italian borders there lived 323,549 Slovenes, 147,459 Croats and 34,454 Germans. Within the Territory of Venezia Giulia there lived 366,385 Italians. The situation had changed dramatically eleven years later when according to the Italian census, 258,944 Slovenes, 92,800 Croats, 4,185 Germans, and 531,824 Italians lived in the same territory. In 1910, 67,000 foreigners, most of whom were Italian citizens, had been recorded on Austrian territory, but the change is still too large to be credible (Winkler,



Changes in the state borders on the border region of north eastern Adriatic from the 15th century to the year 1918.
 Spremembe državnih meja v obmejni regiji severozahodnega Jadrana od 15. stoletja do leta 1918.



Changes in the state borders on the border region of north eastern Adriatic from the year 1918 to the year 1997.
 Spremembe državnih meja v obmejni regiji severovzhodnega Jadrana od leta 1918 do 1997.

1931, 126-135). It must be noted that the ethnic groups in this territory were very intermingled, so that Slovene-Croatian relations here were also very complicated. A thorough analysis of the similar 1900 census data tells us that around 8,000 Slovenes lived south of today's Slovenia-Croatia border, while only 3,000 Croats lived north of it.

According to the National Cadaster for Istria of October 1, 1945, in Istria alone lived 165,000 Croats, 54,000 Slovenes, and 73,500 Italians according to nationality. According to use of language in the family, there were 165,000 Croats, 53,000 Slovenes, and 81,000 Italians. According to the same data from 1945, a little more than 1,600 Croats and a little less than 27,000 Italians lived within today's borders of Slovenia. Some 4,800 Slovenes and almost 47,000 Italians lived in Croatia (Cadastre National de L'Istrie: d'après le Recensement du 1^{er} Octobre 1945, 1946, 530-588).

Because of the politically motivated decision of the majority of Italians to leave Communist Yugoslavia, a little over 3,000 Italians live today in Slovenia (SLRS, 1995, 71) and a little more than 21,000 Italians in Croatia, among them 15,600 still living in Istria (CARCRBH, 1993, 114-119). In 1981, the Italian government estimated the number of Slovenes living in Italy at around 60,000 (Bufon, 1992, 62).

In the 1960's, Communist Yugoslavia and Italy signed several bilateral agreements that made possible a large flow of people, goods, and services between the two countries. The liberal regime at the border also appears in the fact that by the 1970's there were already seventy border crossings of various categories over the 235 kilometers of the Slovene section of the Yugoslav-Italian land border. In 1980, there were seventeen million crossings of the Yugoslav-Italian border, most of them through Slovene border points (SLRS, 1995, 33).

The open frontier made the rapid economic development of the region possible, especially on the Slovene side of Slovene-Italian border. On the Slovene side and in Croatian Istria, the tourism industry developed quickly. In the 1970's and 1980's, Italians were already buying gasoline that was and still is much cheaper on the Slovene side than in Italy, while the residents of Yugoslavia left millions of American dollars in Trieste in exchange for goods they could not find in Yugoslavia.

The importance of this region for the economic development of the wider Central European region is shown in the expansion of its ports. Three large ports developed within fifty kilometers of coastline: Trieste, Rijeka, and Koper. From the beginning of its development, Trieste was a very important port for the Habsburg Monarchy, and the importance of the Port of Trieste for the whole Austrian part of the Monarchy increased once the Southern Railway linking Vienna with Trieste was completed. With the end of Trieste's status as a separate free port in 1891, tariffs were no longer levied on goods

entering by land from elsewhere in Austria-Hungary. New port facilities and a second rail line to Vienna opened in 1901 to attract further bank investment, mainly from Vienna, as well as new firms. Trieste's large Italian majority, long commercially preeminent, founded most of the new industrial enterprises in and around the city. The city's population rose to 229,000 by 1910. It included 57,000 Slovenes (Cattaruzza, 1985, 189-209). Trieste was also the headquarters of Austro-Americana, the main carrier for immigrants from Austria-Hungary to America. By World War I, four million people had left via Trieste to seek their fortunes in the United States.

The railway was completed from Vienna to Celje in 1846, to Ljubljana in 1849, and to Trieste in 1857. In the 1890's, a railway was built from Zagreb to Rijeka, and in the middle of the 1970's, more than 110 years after the Vienna-Trieste railway, a branch line was completed to Koper. Thus all three countries of the region - Slovenia, Croatia, and Italy - have their own ports with railway connections that enable economically profitable cargo traffic. Here we must stress the importance of the fact that Rijeka served as the port for the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy, while Koper began to develop after World War II so that the former Socialist Republic of Slovenia would have a port of its own in accordance with confederalist trends within the former Yugoslavia. In spite of the relatively small space available for the port, Koper had already surpassed Rijeka in the 1970's according to tonnage shipped. Trieste remains the most important oil port in the region, while Koper and Rijeka became important ports for freight and bulk cargo during the post-World War II Yugoslav period. We must emphasize as well the fact that three major European rail lines pass through this region: from Portugal, Spain, southern France, and the Po Plain through Ljubljana and Maribor on to Hungary, Ukraine, and Russia, which the European Union has adopted as one of Europe's main east-west lines; the Rijeka-Zagreb-Budapest line; and the very important line from Trieste via Gorizia, Udine, and the Val Canale Valley to Austria (Klemenčič, V., Genorio, 1992, 43-64).

In conclusion, let us look into the future of this region in connection with its future integration into the European Union. The ethnic map of the region has changed in the last century as a result of economic and other pressures of assimilation and of physical extermination during World War II. The world is becoming ever smaller, and therefore we must emphasize the possibilities that all three ports offer for intercontinental links with the region. Competition among the ports will be replaced by cooperation, and the negative features of borders will disappear.

For the well-being of all the people of the region, respect for ethnic minority rights will be essential in the Northern Adriatic region. Slovenes and Friulians in Italy and Italians in Slovenia and Croatia will have to be

given all minority rights. In addition to general human rights, it will be necessary to give special rights to minority populations, especially regarding language, education, the possibility of forming their own organizations, unlimited opportunities for contact with their mother nations, the formation of their own public information systems and publishing, the possibility of using their own languages at work, political representation, and autonomy (Pan, 1993).

Let us emphasize that in recent years many European organizations have adopted numerous resolutions and protocols, of which the most important are those adopted in the last five years, for example, The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages adopted by the Council of Europe on June 22, 1992, and Recommendation 1201 (1993) on an additional protocol on the rights of minorities to the European Convention on Human Rights (Klemenčič, V., 1997, 365-380).

VLOGA SEVERNO JADRANSKE OBMEJNE REGIJE MED ITALIJO, HRVAŠKO IN SLOVENIJO V PRETEKLOSTI IN V PROCESU EVROPSKE INTEGRACIJE

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POVZETEK

Zaradi svoje geopolitične lege je območje severnega Jadrana imelo že od nekdaj pomembno vlogo v vojaškem, ekonomskem in političnem pogledu in mnoge evropske sile so se v različnih zgodovinskih obdobjih potegovala za nadzor te naravne zaje v osrčje srednje Evrope. V tem prostoru je zato prišlo do številnih sprememb v politični karti in z njimi povezanih premikov političnih meja, kar ni ostalo brez posledic tudi na spreminjanje dokaj pestre etnične strukture severnega Jadrana. Najprej se je tu kot regionalna sila razvila Beneška republika, po njenem razpadu in kratkotrajni francoski zasedbi pa je celotno območje prešlo v roke habsburške države. Do nadaljnje spremembe je prišlo po zedinjenju Italije leta 1866, ko je bilo tej državi priključeno nekdanje beneško ozemlje do historične meje z Avstrijo. Po prvi svetovni vojni je Italija pridobila nadzor nad zahodno Slovenijo in Istro in s tem tudi nad celotnim severnim Jadranom. Stanje se je vnovič spremenilo po drugi svetovni vojni, ko je Jugoslaviji kot zavezniški državi ter ob podpori ameriških Slovencev uspelo doseči premik politične meje do neposrednega zaledja Trsta, ki je bil za krajši čas vključen v vmesno mednarodno cono. Z osamosvojitvijo Slovenije in Hrvaške sta obe državi prevzeli dotedanjo jugoslovansko vlogo pri nadzoru vzhodnega dela severnega Jadrana. Politične spremembe po prvi in drugi svetovni vojni so privedle do znatnih sprememb tudi v demografski in etnični podobi tega območja, kar je sprožilo nemalo napetosti med sosednjimi deželami. Kljub temu sta Italija in Jugoslavija po drugi svetovni vojni, zlasti pa od šestdesetih let dalje, veliko prispevali k liberalizaciji mejnega režima in povečevanju mejne propustnosti z odprtjem številnih mejnih prehodov, kar je omogočilo porast obmejne ekonomije in mednarodnih prekomejnih gospodarskih izmenjav. Porasel je tudi promet v pristaniščih severnega Jadrana, kjer so se v zračni razdalji samo petdesetih kilometrov razvile kar tri luke: ob Trstu in Rijeki, ki sta se uveljavili že za časa Avstrije, je v zadnjih desetletjih povečala svoje kapacitete in oskrbovano zaledje zlasti luka Koper. Slednja je pridobila železniško povezavo šele sredi sedemdesetih let, a je v tem času po čisti tonaži, se pravi brez naftnih pretovorov, že prehitela tržaško in reško luko. V perspektivi evropske integracije je pričakovati večje sodelovanje ne le med lukami in ekonomskimi dejavniki, ampak tudi na družbenem področju. Uveljavljanje evropskih načel in standardov na področju zaščite in promocije regionalnih in manjšinskih jezikov bo tako nedvomno pripomoglo k tvornejšemu sožitju med etničnimi skupinami in narodi, ki živijo na območju severnega Jadrana.

Ključne besede: severni Jadran, zgodovina politične razmejitev

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