

WOMEN TEACHERS IN THE WHIRLWIND OF POST-WAR CHANGES IN THE JULIAN MARCH (1918–1926)

Marta VERGINELLA

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

e-mail: marta.verginella@ff.uni-lj.si

ABSTRACT

The article addresses changes occurring in education in the Julian March after November 1918. Based on the press and archival materials, it provides an analysis of the school authorities' policy and the response of Slovene and Croatian teachers to a gradual closing of minority schools, with special attention to the position and operation of Slovene women teachers and their attitude towards the woman question. Attempting to adjust to the new circumstances and to defy Italianization, the Slovene minority school system introduced new forms of self-organization and intensive political activities. It was particularly Slovene women teachers who intensified their professional and public operation in the transition period also because the post-war period was favourably disposed towards young teachers. Being cut away from Ljubljana, the cultural and political centre, and aversion to the new state and its nationalist politics contributed to the susceptibility to radical trains of thought, also in terms of the woman question.

Keywords: teachers, Julian March, transition, women question, antifascism

INSEGNANTI NEL VORTICE DEI CAMBIAMENTI DEL DOPOGUERRA NELLA VENEZIA GIULIA (1918–1926)

SINTESI

L'articolo affronta i cambiamenti avvenuti nel sistema scolastico della Venezia Giulia dopo il novembre 1918. Sulla base della stampa e dei materiali d'archivio, fornisce un'analisi della politica delle autorità scolastiche e la risposta degli insegnanti sloveni e croati alla graduale chiusura delle scuole delle minoranze, con particolare attenzione alla posizione e al ruolo svolto dalle insegnanti slovene, impegnate anche sul fronte della questione femminile. Nel tentativo di adattarsi alle nuove circostanze e di sfidare la politica di italianizzazione, il sistema scolastico della minoranza slovena ha introdotto nuove forme di autorganizzazione, sostenute da una intensa attività politica. Soprattutto le insegnanti slovene intensificarono la loro attività professionale e pubblica nel periodo di transizione anche perché il dopoguerra fu favorevolmente predisposto nei confronti delle più giovani. La lontananza dal centro culturale e politico sloveno e l'avversione per il nuovo Stato e la sua politica nazionalista hanno contribuito l'adesione a correnti di pensiero radicali, anche in tema di questione femminile.

Parole chiave: maestre, Venezia Giulia, transizione, questione femminile, antifascismo

INTRODUCTION¹

At the turn of the 20th century, women's role in education began to increase in many European countries. They were allowed to attend teachers' training schools from the 1870s onwards; from 1880s onwards these schools turned into bona fide generators of educated girls, particularly in countries with compulsory basic schooling. Girls from the middle class were given an opportunity to acquire secondary-school education and, in many instances, vocational independence. Much like elsewhere in Europe, in Italy and Austria-Hungary teaching was increasingly feminized, particularly at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. The end of World War I saw a significant increase in the number of women teachers; however, their membership in rank organizations was not reflected in greater decision-making power (De Fort, 1981).

The article addresses changes occurring in education in the Julian March, which included the areas of Gorizia and Trieste, as well as Istria, the attitude of the new political authorities towards schooling and educators regardless of their gender. Based on the press and archival materials, it provides an analysis of the school authorities' policy and the response of Slovene and Croatian teachers to a gradual closing of minority schools, with special attention to the position and operation of Slovene women teachers and their attitude towards the woman question.

SCHOOLING IN TRANSITION

On 14 February 1919 the Triestine Slovene-language periodical *Edinost* published an article about the changes in Vienna that were brought about by the post-war period. The author of this article does not hide his contentment that women who had been kept away from home and their traditional roles returned to "their calling":

If you came to Vienna during the war, you saw women working everywhere. You were bothered by a woman conductor on the railway, a nice woman conductor handed you the ticket on a tram, letters were delivered by women. There were women in uniforms everywhere. They were dragged away from their families and hearths, their work was needed elsewhere and they were robbed of their female character, at least in part. People thought that men would not get jobs upon their return. But this was settled quickly. Men returned to their posts. Women lost the railway and the tram, offices and barbershops, all sectors that were previously occupied by men exclusively. Women conductors will continue to exist only in the history of the bloody war. Now what? Did they earn more than for food and rags? Are they not too old to play the 'domestic daughter' and to miserable conditions allow for this? Will they get new jobs? Their only option is marriage and even

1 The article was elaborated within the EIRENE project (full title: Post-war transitions in gendered perspective: the case of the North-Eastern Adriatic Region), founded by the European Research Council under Horizon 2020 financed Advanced Grant founding scheme [ERC Grant Agreement n. 742683].

*this is impossible in the ongoing situation for the majority of little girls. To them, peace signifies a horrible war for bread and clothes. Will they be able to fight for this naturally and not fall prey to men, not out of recklessness but because they need clothes, shoes, food, accommodation, everything, everything, everything. The battlefield of the street will be horrendous and nowadays mankind is tasked – not only in Vienna – with preventing this miserable shameful struggle, the worst that history will ever know. Will mankind be strong enough? It has obligations because these are the fruits of its own mistakes.*²

In terms of moralistic and misogynist accents, this depiction of the new period published in the Triestine periodical *Edinost* does not differ from many others that appeared in the post-war press on the fringes of the former Habsburg empire, which were in 1918 occupied by Italian troops, or elsewhere in Europe. As is the case with post-war transitional periods in general, the public discourse reflected the aspirations for the so-called “cultural demobilization” or the discontinuation of wartime mentality that, inter alia, enabled women to enter the public sphere (Sharp & Stibbe, 2011; Horne, 2005) and highlighted the need to return to “normality” that was at the time equated with the pre-war patriarchal order (Handrahan, 2004). Hopes and efforts to restore the pre-war situation in the economic, political and social sense were abundant, not only among conservative powers that opposed radical social changes and thus regarded women’s emancipation with disfavour, but also among liberals, who were afraid of radical changes and the related overly established women’s equality.

A commentary published in *Učiteljski list*, a journal of Slovene and Croatian teachers in the Julian March, is interesting in this regard.³ It mentions the necessity of setting boundaries to the “post-war dissoluteness, vanity and extravagance” and welcomes the initiative of the society of “our women” and its formation of a front that would stand up to “all evil that was dispersed after the war, even to the small alpine hamlets.”⁴

A severe economic crisis and mass unemployment after the war called for swift a action in the Italian-occupied territory. Two million people were unemployed in Italy in 1919, many of whom were veterans and teachers with university education. Orlando’s, Nitti’s, and Giolitti’s post-war governments dealt with a general rebellious atmosphere, which was created by workers, as well as many educated individuals. It was maintained in the periodical *La scuola* that the discontent among teachers was also a consequence of their low salaries; teachers were paid even less than workers

2 *Edinost*, 14 February 1919: Nova doba in Dunajčanke, IV.

3 *Učiteljski list* was published in Trieste from 1920 to 1926 as a journal of the Association of Slavic (in places written as Yugoslav) Teachers. Initially, it published texts written by both liberal and socialist writers. After 1921 the rift between “representatives of the bourgeoisie” who argued that it is necessary to “do one’s duty and be loyal to one’s new homeland and its laws” and those who maintained that “socialism must be a domain of all parties” increased and the socialist-oriented writers prevailed (*Učiteljski list*, 1 September 1921: Naše stališče, 1).

4 *Učiteljski list*, 10 December 1922: Razne vesti. Ženski svet, 280.

(Barbagli, 1974, 474–475). The situation in the labour market set the tone for a reform of the school system, which was advocated also by the teachers' association *Unione nazionale delle maestre e dei maestri italiani*. A major reform of the Italian school system was supported by leading Italian liberal intellectuals and educators, one of whom deserves particular mention, namely the Sicilian pedagogue Giuseppe Lombardo Radice, also due to his efforts in courses for teachers in new provinces that were organized by the Italian school authorities.⁵ There were too many people with secondary-school or university education in Italy; consequently, one of the goals of the new school reform, which was named after its main creator Giovanni Gentile, was to limit the access to university and enrolment in specific study courses. With the establishment of women's lyceum that was thought to have sufficed for Italian girls' intellectual and moral needs, the reform aimed to limit girls' university education and, first and foremost, to reduce the number of girls enrolling in teachers' training schools (Barbagli, 1974, 460–461, 484).⁶

Attempts to curtail the employment of women teachers, particularly by means of lower salaries,⁷ turned out not to be efficient enough. Also because the prevailing pedagogical discourse from the second part of the 19th century onwards bestowed a social and maternal calling on women educators, making them responsible for teaching the mother tongue, spreading basic knowledge among children and nation, as well as for strengthening national sentiments. Initially, they were regarded as an extension of motherhood, but soon became the “heart” of the teaching staff (Soldani, 1993, 68).⁸

The fascist authorities recognized women teachers as conveyors of basic knowledge for tackling life (Soldani, 1993, 69); however, due to their increase, the authorities attempted to prevent them from accessing the most important positions as well, especially from becoming headmistresses (De Grazia, 1992, 197). This was not always the case in the Julian March, where Italian women teachers played an important role

5 Giuseppe Lombardo Radice (1879–1938), a cocreator of Gentile's reform was in charge of primary school system in the years 1922/24. On his efforts to improve teachers' education and form the “national school system” see Dessardo, 2018, 7–8. He argued that in “new provinces” Italian school authorities should combine the functionality of the former Austrian school system with Italian patriotic culture (Dessardo, 2018, 11–13). His opinion must have been influenced by his wife Gemma Harasim, a teacher and pedagogue from Rijeka. More on Gemma Harasim see Sistoli Paoli, 2009.

6 Higher education was a sort of “parking” for girls (Barbagli, 1974, 233–239). On the specificity of women's lyceum in Trieste, which had operated already in Austria see *La scuola al Confine*, 10–11–12, I, June–July 1924: *Il liceo femminile*, 36–40.

7 According to the Casati Act, which was passed in 1859, women teachers' salary equalled three-quarters of that of their male counterparts (Soldani, 1993, 83); the situation in Austria was similar, where women teachers were paid 20% less than their male colleagues. The Slovene Woman Teachers' Society, which was established in Ljubljana in 1898 to provide material support to women teachers and advocate for their right to further education, aimed to do away with differences in salary based on teachers' gender (Hojan, 1998, 138–139). The Association of Slovene Teachers' Societies, which was formed in 1889, did not protect their interests to a sufficient degree.

8 In an unsigned article published in *Učiteljski list* in 1921 teachers were regarded as the lungs of the nation: “If the lungs whither away, the entire nation is sick.” (*Učiteljski list*, 16 January 1921: Suha roba, 2).

in the establishment of the new school system, particularly kindergartens, and were an indispensable player in the struggle for national primacy (Rolandi, 2020).

Before 1918, it was easiest for women teachers to find employment in kindergartens and primary schools in the periphery of the Kingdom of Italy, where municipal authorities had less money for schooling and thus strove to employ cheaper and less educated teaching staff (Soldani, 1993, 91). The situation was similar in the Austrian Cisleithania, where women teachers were given less-respected positions and were paid less than their male counterparts (Milharčič Hladnik, 1995, 57–61).⁹ Teachers' training schools, which were established by the central Austrian authorities in provinces' most important cities¹⁰ and included women's classes after 1869, increased significantly the share of women in the ranks of teachers.¹¹ Following the occupation of the former Austrian Littoral and Istria, Italian school authorities attempted to fill the available spots with Italian women teachers, alumni of the teachers' training school in Gorizia and other schools in the province and the state. Even though the number of students enrolled in the Italian section of the Gorizian teachers' training school tripled in number in 1914 (Pillon, 2005, 144), the post-war number of alumni did not suffice for covering the needs in the territory of the Julian March after 1918. Their appointments were often accompanied by polemics because the school authorities sent them to the most remote places, while those coming from other parts of Italy were given posts in cities.¹²

The mission of all teachers' training schools in the new provinces was to inspire teachers for pro-Italian sentiments. The one in Tolmin, where Slovene and Croatian teachers were educated, had to bend to this agenda as well. Their accommodation was provided by the *Convitto Francesco Skodnik*, which invited boarders of both genders every year, mostly offering free board and lodging.¹³ In the school year 1926/27, out of a total of 73 spots there were 33 spots intended for girls, the bulk of which were offered free of charge (in 1924 there were 60 spots offered for free), which implies that the new school authorities were prepared to invest in the acquisition of Slovene and Croatian students of both genders.¹⁴ They believed that after the discontinuation of Slovene-language education they would turn into patriotic Italian teachers that would be capable of working in a nationally challenging and non-homogenous area. By making Italian the obligatory medium of instruction, the Gentile reform generated a legal basis for a discontinuation of minority schooling on all levels.

9 As a rule, a woman teacher gave up her job if she got married, she could keep her position if she married a male teacher.

10 A women's teachers' training school with a Slovene, Italian and German section was established in Gorizia on 10 July 1875 (Tul, 2005, 112). On teachers' training schools in Austria cf. Engelbrecht, 1986.

11 On the increased enrolment in the Gorizian teachers' training school at the end of the 19th century cf. Pillon, 2005, 160.

12 *Battaglie per la scuola*, 9, V, November 1924: Folletto, Giobbe avrebbe più pazienza di alcune maestre?, 1–2.

13 ASTs, PAST, b. 135.

14 On how non-natives, the so-called *allogeni*, were treated with forbearance during their enrolment even if they had finished schools abroad, i.e. in Yugoslavia, see *La scuola al confine*, I, 16, October 1924: Convitto »D. Alighieri« di Gorizia. 60 posti gratuiti, 7.

Italian was introduced as a medium of instruction in the first classes of all elementary schools in the Italian territory with the school year 1923/24, and the remaining classes followed suit in the following years. In Idrija, Slovene junior *gimnazija* was discontinued with the Royal Decree No. 2224 of 27 September 1923; in Tolmin, Slovene language was removed as a medium of instruction with the Royal Decree of 23 October 1925. With the end of the school year 1928/29 Slovene and Croatian were completely removed from primary schools in the Julian March; the only private Slovene school (a remnant of Sts. Cyril and Methodius schools) in Trieste was discontinued with a decree issued at the beginning of the school year 1930/31. Boarding institutions for the native population, such as *Convitto Francesco Skodnik*, were tailored to meet the demands of the new national and political mission.¹⁵

As a journal of Slovene and Croatian teachers,¹⁶ *Učiteljski list* published reports on a regular basis about the restructuring of Slovene and Croatian schools, their discontinuation, dismissals and transfers of Slovene and Croatian women teachers, as well as appointments of new women teachers who had no command of the children's mother tongue. The transfer of the Slovene section of teachers' training school from Gorizia to Tolmin, where a preparatory school for a coeducational teachers' training school began its operation in 1919, was a well-planned choice of the new authorities. By choosing a town in the periphery, they initially sought to limit and in 1928 finally disrupt the education of Slovene teachers, which had taken place in Gorizia in the Austro-Hungarian period. The transfer of the preparatory school for the teachers' training school from Tolmin to Cerkno, which was formally never carried out despite having been approved by the Civil Affairs Office on 10 February 1919, points to a search for temporary solutions for the minorities' secondary-school education, which was initially transferred from the most important urban centres to the periphery and then completely Italianized and discontinued by means of the Gentile reform. *La scuola al confine*, the journal of the school *provveditorato* in the Julian March, announced in 1927 that school in Italy could be only *fascist*.¹⁷

The introduction of the exclusively Italian school system did not occur without difficulties or disagreements between the centre and the periphery, but also between individuals and institutions, which is evident from reports written by the

15 ASTs, PAST, b. 135, Relazione sull'andamento nell'anno scolastico, Trieste 1927.

16 Up to the end of World War I, teachers in the Littoral were part of the Austrian Yugoslav Teachers' Association, which was headquartered in Ljubljana. With the introduction of the new border and on the initiative of Anton Grmek, the Slavic Teachers' Association in the Julian March was established on 16 November 1919; its first assembly convened on 2 February 1920. On 1 March 1920 this association published the first issue of its periodical *Učiteljski list*, from January 1921 onwards it published also *Novi rod* in Slovene and from April 1921 onwards *Naša nada* in Croatian. The association's activities included, inter alia, training courses for Slovene and Croatian teachers. More in: OZE NŠK, Šolstvo, fasc. Zveza slovanskih učiteljskih društev v Julijski krajini, No. 2.

17 *La scuola al confine*, III, 9, 15 February 1926: A. Morgana, La scuola fascista, 117–119.

leaders of ONAIR,¹⁸ which address events occurring in the Tolmin kindergarten in the school year 1923/24, where candidates from the Tolmin teachers' training college were interns and which was ran by the teacher of didactics Augusta Articoli Cipparrone. The leadership of ONAIR was convinced that her tactless and inappropriate conduct and her disregard of the local conditions during lessons caused severe damage to the kindergarten and its moral and political position and, consequently, the organization's further operation.

*The teacher in question engaged in conduct that is inappropriate for a kindergarten and caused distress to the community. In the kindergarten she addressed a teacher and children in an inappropriate manner, telling the teacher rudely to explain what she taught them in the dialect and said repeatedly that they 'speak an ugly language at home'. Word got out and Slovene periodicals reported about the incident; they incited a campaign that resulted in the number of children attending the kindergarten being reduced by half, i.e. a mere 46 children out of a total of 62 attended the kindergarten. A communication sent by the provincial headmistress of ONAIR to Rome on 16 June 1926 demonstrates that the teacher asked for leave of absence due to her distress; the professor was punished and documents associated with the incident were handed over to the Ministry of Education.*¹⁹

From 1921 onwards ONAIR planned to establish kindergartens in the Triestine and Gorizian region, mostly in the most important Slovene centres, e.g. Postojna, Divača, Bovec, and Kobarid. The teacher Colombicchio Radoicovich is credited with its opening in Kobarid in 1923. Her selflessness was stressed in a letter sent to Rome, as was the necessity of charitable work, and the inappropriateness of "political concepts." When establishing Italian kindergartens in a completely Slovene environment, the leadership of ONAIR counted on the "right persons" or adequate teaching staff, which is evident from from a communication that mentions the teacher Colombicchio and her importance for the establishment of the school and kindergarten in Idrija: "We must do well, even better than we did in the past." When replacing Slovene schools with Italian ones, "we count on her to win over the environment in Idrija, so that the kindergarten and the school will be a success, which will make ONAIR will look good, etc."²⁰

18 About ONAIR (*Opera nazionale di assistenza Italia Redenta Comitato regionale per la Venezia Giulia*) and the establishment of Italian kindergartens and workshops for girls in Julian March cf. Downs, 2018, and Gobatto, 2012.

19 ASTs, ONAIR, ex b. 1, scatola 1, fasc. Giunta Esecutiva centrale, Prof. Cipparrone, 16 June 1926. From November 1919 onwards *Opera nazionale di assistenza Italia Redenta* and its provincial committee (ASTs, ONAIR, ex b. 1, scatola 1, fasc. Giunta Esecutiva centrale, Trieste 14 November 1919; *Ispettrice Regionale Donna Bona Luzzato* (P.N. 355/1) Trieste, 23 April 1923).

20 ASTs, ONAIR, ex b. 1, scatola 1, fasc. Giunta Esecutiva centrale, Gentilissima Signorina Edvige Costantini, 16 November 1923.

TEACHERS' MIGRATIONS AND THE ITALIANIZATION OF SCHOOLING

The question of continuity or discontinuity with the pre-war period was at the very core of the Italian school policy in new provinces; however, as we are about to find out, it was addressed also by Slovene teachers, particularly by women. From 19 November 1918 onwards, with the introduction of the Italian military administration, began a gradual Italianization of Slovene and Croatian schools in Gorizia and Gradisca, Inner Carniola, Trieste, and Istria (Barbalič, 1918, 117),²¹ i.e. in areas encompassed by the Julian March, the new administrative-political unit (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 77). The expedited deconstruction of the Slovene and Croatian school system is evident from the official sources, as well as from the Slovene and Croatian press despite the statement made by General Carlo Pettiti di Roreto upon his assumption of the military and civil authority (Brevi cenni, 1921, 17) that “barring German, the Italian administration shall keep all schools in the occupied territory regardless of the language” and even though specific official reports written by the Italian administration were filled with positive notes stating that “the authorities saw to the opening of as many Slovene and Croatian schools as possible in the spirit of equality and political peace.” In 1919 there were 36 Slovene schools discontinued, 60 Croatian, 23 German, and 21 *utraquist* schools, totalling 139, and a mere 9 Italian ones.²²

The question of schools was recognized as one of the central questions of the occupation policy from the very arrival of Italian authorities. All types of German schools were discontinued.²³ The rate of Italianization of the school system varied in different areas, it was contingent upon the local school authorities' and teachers' political orientation, as well as of the number of the non-Italian population and its response to the post-war political changes. Many Slovene schools were not restored, e.g. in the territory of the former Austrian Littoral, a few of them were turned into Italian schools without any legal basis. Italian occupation authorities prohibited the establishment of new Slovene and Croatian private schools; similarly, they hindered private lessons of Slovene and Croatian as well.

In January 1919 the General Secretariat for Civil Affairs with the supreme command of the Italian army issued instructions for the reemployment of public servants in the occupied territories. The appointment of teachers in municipal

21 Immediately after the end of the war the area of Poreč, Pazin, and Pula saw a swift discontinuation of Croatian-language women's schools.

22 Lavo Čermelj provided the number of discontinued Slovene and Croatian schools, as well as classes and teaching posts. After 1919 they totalled only 392 instead 540. Out of a total of 49 public and private Croatian schools only 4 remained in operation in the Pula district, all others were turned into Italian schools (Čermelj, 1974, 41–42).

23 Italian authorities kept German schools in the area of Tarvisio and the Canal Valley, areas populated by the German minority, and discontinued them in Gorizia, Trieste and elsewhere. In the first post-war period the military authorities were particularly averse to German teachers, which is demonstrated by the case of Elena Camus, a teacher and a widow, a “German” who wanted to teach in Trieste. Even though “her conduct was good [...], no stringent circumstance justified her arrival in Trieste.” (ASTs, CCCTT, b. 4).

and primary schools was confirmed and approved by the Provincial School Council, which was in the domain of the military authorities. All public servants were controlled by the supreme military command, the government's body in the occupied territories. The military authorities were quick to begin gathering data on teachers' political and ethnic orientation, as well as on their teaching activities. The pre-war teaching staff was subject to strict political control, regardless of their national belonging.²⁴ The new authorities paid particular attention to Slovene and Croatian teachers because they recognized them as a potential obstacle for a comprehensive and radical Italianization of the acquired, "liberated" areas.²⁵ In their treatise entitled *Scuola e confine. Le educazioni educative della Venezia Giulia 1915–1945* Adriano Andri and Giulio Mellinato argue that the introduction of the Italian military administration in the Julian March brought about a difficult atmosphere which was reflected in permanent tensions that were deepened by the *fasci's* violent operation and stemmed from the "rigidity of the soldiers' anti-democratic tendency and the short-sidedness of state officials who were sent from old provinces to the new ones and were unwilling to understand the complexity and diversity of social, political and ethnic problems in the Julian March." (Andri & Mellinato, 1994, 41).

The governor's and civil commissioners' initial moderate stance (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 80, 120–121) bent to demands voiced by irredentist circles very quickly; they demanded a planned Italianization of education and the removal of "Slavic" education (Apollonio, 2001, 53). Istria was the first to see this materialized, Trieste and Gorizia followed suit, while in the Littoral's interior this took place at a later point.²⁶ The governor's reconciliatory tone that hinted at respecting all languages and customs of the population in the new Italian province (Nuova Regione d'Italia), not indicating a desire for retaliation and prosecution (Visintin, 1991, 27), was met with criticism expressed by spontaneously formed epuration committees, advocates for "patriotic moralization" that reproached him for being too cautious and favourably disposed towards Italy's opponents (Visintin, 1991, 29–30). Following the abolishment of the military high command and the introduction of the Central Office for the New Provinces of the Kingdom (*Ufficio Centrale per le Nuove Provincie del Regno*) 1 August 1919, which was helmed by Francesco Salata, a native of Istria known for his irredentist zest, the Italian

24 On gathering information about Italian teachers and staff employed in Italian schools in ASTs, CCCTT, b. 11, fasc. 17, Informazioni personali.

25 A report about teachers in private Slovene schools established by the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Society in Trieste's Via Giuliani and Acquedotto, where a few politically active women teachers were employed – of whom Pavla Hočevar and Ilka Vašte deserve particular mention (Vašte, 1964, 131; Debelli Turk, 1980, 103; Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994, 483) – states that the conditions were satisfactory and that "nothing negative" can be said about them, as well as that the majority of teachers had a good command of Italian. The author of this report was convinced that Slovene teachers should be controlled more intensively and continually, as well as that it was necessary to employ teachers who "tested and approved national sentiments." (ASTs, CCCTT, b. 7).

26 *Učiteljski list*, 16 October 1921: Bič krivice, II.

authorities adopted a negative attitude towards Slovene and Croatian teachers. The authorities followed guidelines promoted by the former president of *Legge Nazionale* in Pula Rodolfo Corenich and Francesco Rauni, the founder of *Il nuovo giornale di Pola*. They were convinced that Italian schools and kindergartens should be established in each Slovene and Croatian settlement and that competent Italian teachers from Istria, Trieste and Gorizia (Dessardo, 2015)²⁷ should be appointed to expedite the Italianization of new provinces

Andrea Dessardo, who conducted a comparative research of the transitional period in education in South Tyrol and in the Julian March, maintains that there was a shortage of teachers despite the discontinuation of Slovene and Croatian schools in eastern provinces. According to the calculations of the General Civil Commissariat the Julian March was short of 892 teachers, 440 Slovene, 249 German, 169 Croatian,²⁸ and 30 teachers in *uquaq* schools; however, as pointed out by the political society *Edinost*, many teachers were prosecuted, interned or deemed politically inappropriate and dismissed by the new authorities (Dessardo, 2015, 83–87; Bajc, 2018, 1022–1027).

The aspirations to bring teachers favourably disposed towards Italy to the new provinces was expressed clearly by the commissioner for autonomous matters of the Istrian district (*Commissario per gli Affari autonomi della Giunta Istriana*) on 15 July 1920. He had no intention to open Croatian schools that had been closed after 1918 “until there were no politically and nationally trustworthy teachers available.” To this end, he proposed to offer grants for Italian teachers willing to learn Croatian and Slovene or a raise (up to 50%) for teaching in “Slavic” schools. His instructions were exhaustive and concerned the necessary control of “Slavic” teachers, the expedited dismissal of teachers appointed up to that point, the control of clergy that resisted teaching in Italian, as well as teaching Italian as an independent subject in all existing “Slavic” schools (Dessardo, 2015, 96). Apollonio argued that the policy of growing aversion to the Slovene and Croatian population was an expression of the growing influence of Italian irredentists in new administrative structures,

27 Carmelo Cottone mentions the excellent atmosphere among the teaching staff, consisting of locals and newcomers from different parts of the kingdom. Initial disputes that manifested themselves due to their different belonging were said to be done away with in passing. Problems occurred only when teachers were appointed in the countryside, from where teachers originating from other provinces often returned to their place of origin in no time. To prevent that, Cottone proposed special tax allowances and bonuses for male teachers, whom he considered to be more resilient in unfavourable conditions than their female counterparts (Cottone, 1938, 162). On the negative attitude towards teachers from Italian provinces due to the “sense of superiority”, “ignorance of Italian school legislature” and “attachment to the former Austrian order” see also I maestri, 1922, 5.

28 From the very beginning of the Italian administration, Italian military high commands implemented more repressive policies in Croatian Istria. Apollonio maintained that this is also a consequence of strained relations between the Croatian clergy and notable Italian figures there (Apollonio, 2001, 53). These policies are believed to have resulted in not opening secondary schools with Croatian as the language of instruction in Pula and a lyceum in Pazin.

but also of the increasing Slovene and Italian organisational structure that did not hide its aversion to the new authorities and annexation of the occupied territory into Italy.²⁹

From the first months of the occupation onwards the military leadership observed closely the response of the Slovene and Croatian population to political changes in the Italian-occupied territory; this applies also to events taking place in the international arena, particularly in neighbouring Yugoslavia. The Italian military apparatus paid particular attention to all forms of political and national activities, which was abundant among educators. *Učiteljski list* wrote about “pursuing, prosecuting teachers, who refused to believe that this situation was healthy or endurable, a subject that one would rather not address because this is a sad chapter that should be addressed by history.”³⁰ Schooling was thus recognized as a sphere of skirmishes and, subsequently, battles of the national politics of both the winners and of the defeated (Tognon, 1990, 14). It is evident from reports drawn up for the military high command³¹ that the establishment of national primacy in the sphere of education was of key importance to the new Italian authorities in the Julian March. However, it ought to be pointed out that this was not an Italian post-war peculiarity because the situation was similar in Styria, Prekmurje, in multilingual and multiethnic border areas belonging to the Yugoslav state, as well as in Carinthia, which came under Austrian rule after the 1920 plebiscite. In a comparative light, the Italian case is marked by speed and radicalness, not only in multiethnic urban centres, but also in territories inhabited homogeneously by the Slovene and Croatian population.

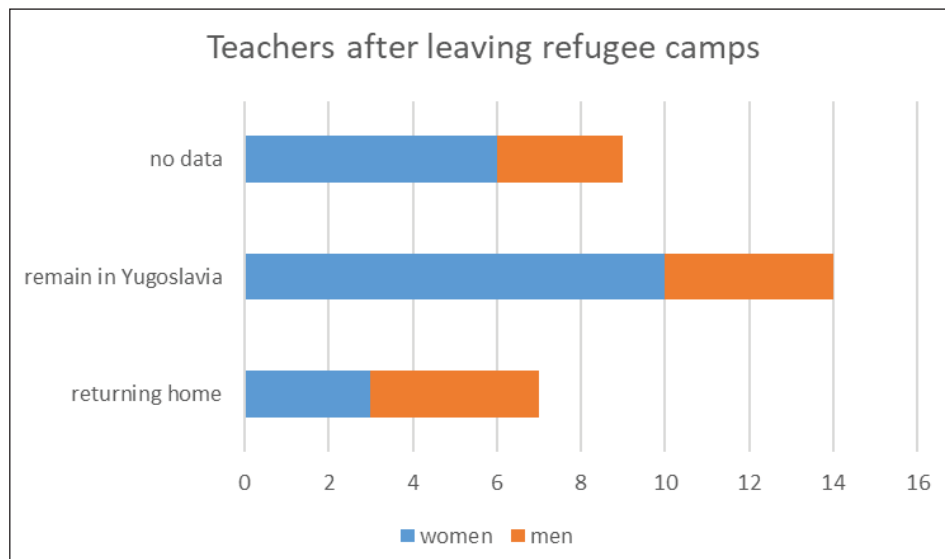
In many a Slovene and Croatian school dismissed Slovene and Italian teachers were initially replaced by soldiers even though they had no pedagogical experience (Dessardo, 2015, 86; Sofri, 2019). *Učiteljski list* drew attention to the decline of quality education, improvisation, inability of the new school authorities to reform the school system in a “modern spirit” and build upon what was best in the Austrian and Italian school legislature.³² On 8 January 1920 the Slovene political society Edinost demanded from the Italian authorities to reopen all schools that had been in operation before the Italian occupation and

29 Almerigo Apollonio argues that the military authorities initially controlled mostly secondary-school teachers in Idrija and Pazin and facilitated the departure of non-native teaching staff and later began to control all teachers (Apollonio, 2001, 53). He mentions the bad influence of the anti-Italian stance of the political society Edinost and the general anti-Italian propaganda of Slovene and Croatian circles: “The leaders of Edinost fuelled suspicions of Italian high commands; consequently, even the most innocent gatherings of the local Slovene elite, Slavic teachers or mayors in Karst were understood as signs of anti-Italian resistance and conspiracy.” (Apollonio, 2001, 77, 88). This interpretation is not confirmed by many cases, particularly not in the sphere of education.

30 *Učiteljski list*, II, 4, 16 February 1921: Iv. Slak, Okrajni šolski sveti, I.

31 ASTs, CCCTT, b. 12.

32 *Učiteljski list*, II, 7, 1 April 1921: Jože Rupnik, Obris zgodovine italijanskega šolstva, II; Zborovanje društva “Unione magistrale giuliana” v Trstu, IV.

Graph 1: Teachers after leaving refugee camps, data compiled from Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994.

to reappoint Yugoslav, i.e. Slovene and Croatian, teachers who were either interned or refugees; however, the authorities turned a deaf ear to their demands. (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 234).

During the war a part of Slovene and Croatian teachers worked in refugee camps and many of them did not return the Julian March. According to the data compiled by Minka Lavrenčič Pahor, 30 teachers worked in refugee camps, 19 of whom were women and 11 men (Graph 1).³³

The bulk of them stayed in Yugoslavia after the war, most often in Styria. Less than half the teachers working in the refugee camp at Strnišče pri Ptuj³⁴ returned to the Julian March after it was closed down in 1923. Particularly women teachers from the Gorizian region, where homes and schools were demolished, remained on Yugoslav soil. Many of them were sent to Prekmurje by the Yugoslav school authorities.³⁵

33 The data provided by Minka Lavrenčič Pahor are not completely reliable; however, they are indicative in terms of the gender ratio. They allow us to understand the extent of dismissals, forced retirement or transfers, as well as various reasons for departures or emigrations with regard to gender. I would like to express my gratitude to Neža Trdin (the Eirene project) for having processed data statistically.

34 On the elementary, trade and lace-making school for refugees in Strnišče pri Ptuj cf. Prinčič, 2020, 52–55.

35 It can be gathered from lists of uprooted teachers that they emigrated to Yugoslavia from the area of Gorizia at first, later also from the area of Trieste and Istria (Graph 5).

Slightly more than half the teachers out of a total of 23 from the Littoral (5 of whom were women) who left for Carinthia to assist in the opening of Slovene schools in the years 1919/20 remained in Yugoslavia after the plebiscite on 10 October 1920 and Carinthia's integration into Austria. The remaining teachers returned to the Littoral.³⁶

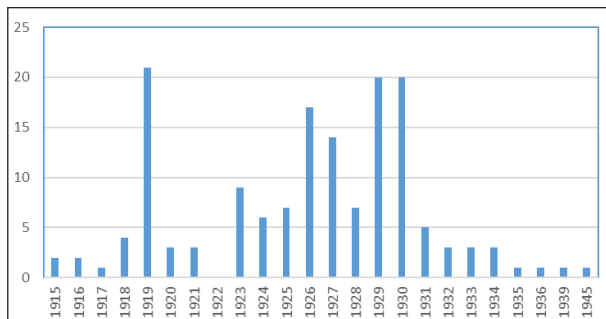
21 men and 18 women teachers emigrated to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes immediately after the arrival of the Italian authorities because they did not have the right of domicile. In the subsequent years they were followed by 144 Slovene and 82 Croatian teachers. The new school authorities made use of Austrian legislature that granted the right of domicile (*Heimatrecht, Indigénat, Pertinenza, Illetőség*) (Ganczer, 2017; Hametz, 2019)³⁷ to educators only after 10 years of teaching in a specific place in order to dismiss “politically” or nationally unreliable teachers who had relocated to the Austrian Littoral from Carniola and Croatia before the war.³⁸ Political reasons were often used as an argument to refuse applicants for Italian citizenship. Men (15) outnumbered women (7) among those who were denied employment because they were not granted Italian citizenship immediately after the war; the situation was similar in the period of fascism, with 92 men and 76 women having been dismissed. The authorities sought to reduce the number of Slovene educators also by means of early retirement. Taking into account a longer timespan, we see that men outnumbered women in terms of displacement in 1918 and 1919. After the introduction of the Gentile reform, which was enacted on 1 October 1923 and introduced Italian as the medium of instruction in Slovene schools as well, the number of women teachers who relocated to Yugoslavia from the Julian March increased.

36 Italian school authorities kept a watchful eye on Slovene teachers, former refugees, “because they engaged in political propaganda that was not in line with the state’s interests and national reconciliation.” (ASTs, CCCTT, b. 24, Signor Commissario civile: Corrispondenza personale. Riservatissime).

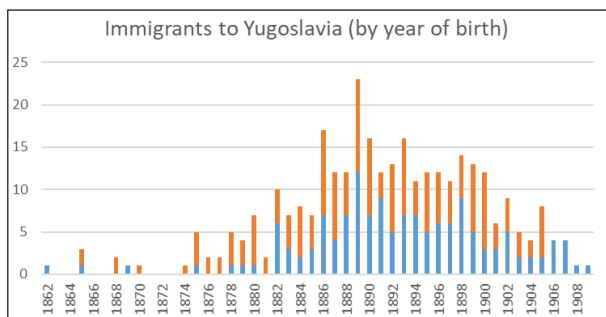
37 In early 1919 Governor Carlo Petitti di Roreto issued an order that allowed the return of people who had previously had the right of domicile in the (at that point) former Austrian Littoral, which was not the case with other immigrants even though they had lived and worked there for years before the war (Purini, 2013, 37). The principle of determining the citizenship on the basis of the right of domicile was included also in peace treaties of successor states of Austria-Hungary.

38 It is evident from individual reports that the military authorities compiled lists of unacceptable teachers or of those whom they considered unable of “becoming good Italians in the liberated territory” on the basis of their former activities. One of such lists included 15 educators, 10 of whom were women teachers working in the area of Postojna, 4 substitute women teachers and 3 natives of Ljubljana (ASTs, CCCTT, b. 7, Relazione Stato Maggiore sezione Politico Militare, 16 Februar 1919). In Tolmin, 4 people are believed to have acted to the detriment of Italy; an inn keeper, a dean, the parish priest and Ludmilla Mezzal, an unemployed teacher, a “propaganda element and almost a connective link or a *trait d’union* between specific families in the town.” (ASTs, CCCTT, b. 25, Affari di polizia. Corrispondenza personale del Commissario).

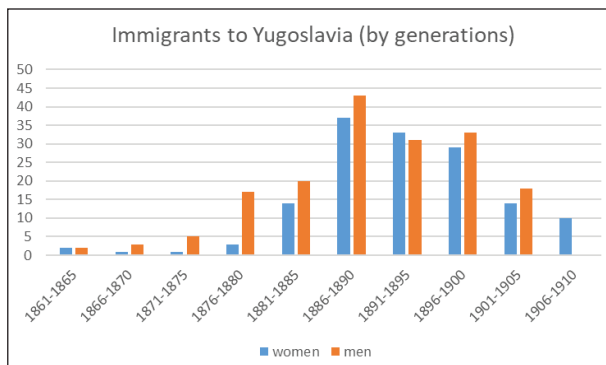
Graph 2: Female teachers: year of migration to Yugoslavia, data compiled from Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994.



Graph 3: Immigrants to Yugoslavia (by year of birth), data compiled from Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994.



Graph 4: Immigrants to Yugoslavia (by generations), data compiled from Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994.

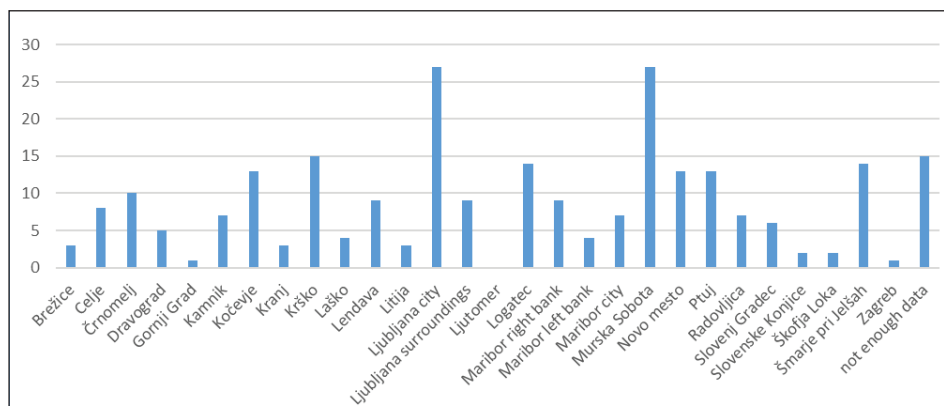


An analysis of departures of 174 men and 143 women teachers shows that their peaks coincided with the year 1919, i.e. with the introduction of the Italian school system and with the year 1929, when Slovene and Croatian were finally discontinued in all former Slovene and Croatian schools. The school in the worker's quarter of St. Giacomo (Sl. Sv. Jakob), the last private school with Slovene as the medium of instruction, was discontinued in September 1930 (Graph 2).

The authorities transferred an Italian school to the premises of the former Sts. Cyril and Methodius Society (Bajc, 2016). An analysis of the displaced educators' dates of birth indicates that it was particularly young teachers that left the Julian March. They belonged to the generation born in the years 1886–1890 and found employment and adjusted more easily to the new, Yugoslav environment (Graph 3, Graph 4).

The bulk of them were employed in and around Ljubljana, Murska Sobota, and Maribor. Slovene school authorities directed teachers from the Littoral to areas experiencing a shortage of educators or areas where a comprehensive Slovene school system was yet to be established after the dismissal and removal of German and Hungarian teachers (Graph 5).

Graph 5: Female teachers: by place of migration (srez), data compiled from Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994.



If we focus solely on Slovene teachers, for whom we have the most data, and disregard Croatian teachers, we see that they represented a significant share of the emigration current from the Julian March, which up to March 1919 included 30 to 40 thousand people (Purini, 2013, 53). Initially, their departure contributed to a radical weakening of the Slovene middle class and with increasing mass departures in the period of fascism in the 1930s also to the imminent eradication of Slovene intelligentsia in centres such as Trieste and Gorizia. In 1919 the society Edinost not only protested against the illegal removal of Slovene schooling and transfer of Slovene *gimnazija* to Ajdovščina and teachers' training

school to Tolmin, two remote towns, but also led a campaign against Slovene teachers who left voluntarily and refugee teachers who preferred remaining in the the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to returning home.

*Let us speak frankly and clearly: nobody made them go, they left their jobs on their own, nobody prevented them from staying here. Ninety percent of those who emigrated across the armistice line left voluntarily and a mere ten percent or less had to cross it to avoid prosecution or were dismissed from their jobs by the administration with an order to leave the occupied area. They were employees in the service of politics and this is what happened to them; but who drove away judges and judicial clerks, employees of financial institutions and post offices, officials, who drove away teachers working in our and other schools, when it was only of 1 March of his year that the present administration halted their salaries, etc. Nobody!*³⁹

The author of the article *Nazaj begunci, nazaj!* (Refugees, return!) maintained that, with Slovene teachers gone, Slovene children were taught by a *carabiniere* or a non commissioned officer in many places. As far as mass departures and “pointless emigration from the occupied territory” were concerned, he was explicit: Yugoslavia did not need all those who let down their own people in the occupied territory and did not find suitable accommodation in the new state.⁴⁰

A similar view was also shared by the Office for the Occupied Territory in Ljubljana, where in the summer of 1920 they encouraged teachers repeatedly to return to the Littoral (Kacin Wohinz, 1972, 236). Slovene teachers did not respond to the invitation, also because they were under the impression of unpunished fascist actions directed against Slovene institutions. The escape of the intelligentsia from the Littoral was addressed also in the periodical *Učiteljski list*, which was critical of their emigration and argued that the intelligentsia “had no roots in the people. [...] Being intellectuals, teachers have an important role: to return to from where they tore themselves away or else they will be knocked over by the waves of development.”⁴¹ The introduction of the Gentile reform in the school year 1923/24, which stipulated that Italian was the medium of instruction in all Slovene schools and required habilitation for teaching Italian⁴² considerably aggravated the situation. An increasing number of Slovene teachers were transferred forcibly to Italy’s interior, particularly Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Piedmont, and Umbria (Graph 6).

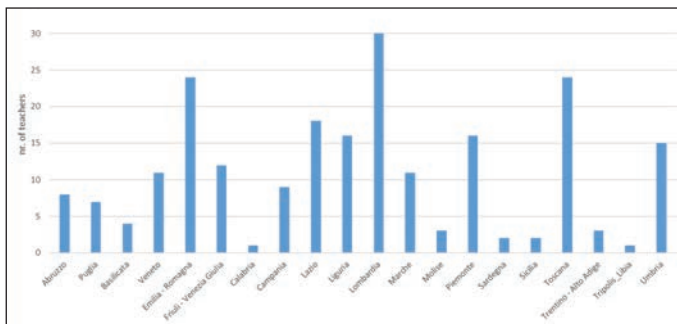
39 *Edinost*, 22 April 1920: *Nazaj, begunci, nazaj!*, 1.

40 *Edinost*, 22 April 1920: *Nazaj, begunci, nazaj!*, 1.

41 *Učiteljski list*, 1 January 1923: *Dilema*, 1.

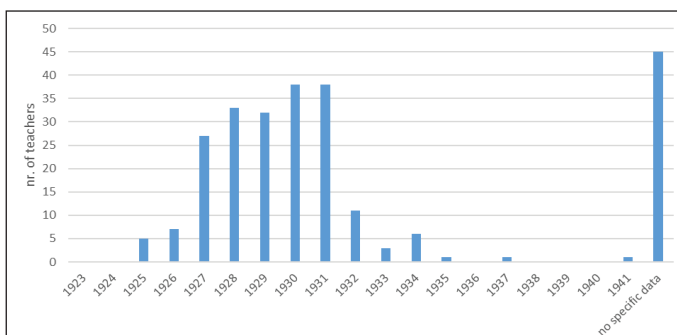
42 On the intellectual and political context of the Gentile reform, which was formed by intellectuals of idealistic provenance. Gentile argued that “the war awakened the nation’s morality” and the question of school became a “great political and national question.” Consequently, a radical reform was required, old Italy had to be defeated and a new one created, the feeling of unity and political discipline had to be maintained, which was at the core of national education that became a political ideal for permanent mobilization after the defeat at Kobarid (Tognon, 1990, 56–66).

Graph 6: Female teachers: reassigned within Italy (by region), data compiled from Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994.



As to women teachers, their transfers peaked in the years 1927 to 1931 as is seen from the Graph 7, which records their dismissal in Italy.⁴³

Graph 7: Female teachers: reassigned within Italy (by year of reassignment), data compiled from Lavrenčič Pahor, 1994.



Amalija Čok was one of Slovene teachers who persisted in Trieste. After having begun teaching at the Slovene school at St. Giovanni (Sl. Sv. Ivan) in 1921, she was under permanent control of the Triestine questura. Carabinieri conducted frequent searches of her home, particularly after she became the secretary of the Teachers’ Society. Her passport application was denied countless times, preventing her from visiting

43 The question of how Slovene teachers who accepted their transfers to Italy’s interior adjusted to the fascist redefinition of a woman’s role and how they experienced it is yet to be explored (De Grazia, 1992, 15).

her brother in Yugoslavia. Accompanied by two agents, she finally managed to cross the border in 1934. She was allowed to meet her brother in Maribor only in the presence of one of the agents. Following the removal of the Slovene headmaster Danilo Daneu from the school at St. Giovanni in 1924 and the appointment of an Italian headmaster, all Slovene classes were discontinued in 1927. Amalija Čok decided to stay in Trieste despite the closure of the Slovene school at St. Giovanni. She became an employee of the Slovene private school at St. Giacomo (Sl. Sv. Jakob), which operated in the scope of the School Society after the discontinuation of Sts. Cyril and Methodius schools. After its closure in 1930, she taught Slovene at home and was involved in the organization of secret Slovene courses in collaboration with Slovene women's and girls' circles.⁴⁴ In the 1930s she taught Slovene at the Galilei private school. She was arrested for teaching Slovene on 3 January 1940 and imprisoned in Monfalcone, where she spent 17 days in solitary confinement.⁴⁵ She was transferred to Trieste after six weeks, to the prison "at the Jesuits," where she was detained up to 15 January 1941.⁴⁶ Her arrest took place in the period of an extensive repressive campaign, which culminated in the 2nd Triestine process of the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State (Verginella, 2008, 259–350). She was imprisoned for eight days as a precaution during Italy's attack of Yugoslavia in 1941. She held secret Slovene-language courses at her home in Longera (Sl. Lonjer). During the final year of the war she prepared Slovene children, who at the time attended Italian schools, for transfer to Slovene schools by agreement with the national liberation committee; consequently, she turned down Germans and the Home Guard that asked her to teach in their Slovene schools.⁴⁷ After the war she held evening lessons of Slovene for young people⁴⁸ and taught at the school at St. Giovanni up to her retirement in 1955. After the Allies restored a large part of the former Slovene school network in the areas of Trieste and Gorizia, individual Slovene teachers who had been dismissed by the fascist authorities returned to classes. Their number was very modest in comparison to that of women teachers who left for Yugoslavia or were transferred to Italy's interior. They were mostly natives of Trieste and Gorizia.

UČITELJSKI LIST AND THE WOMAN QUESTION

Učiteljski list, a journal of the Association of Slovene Teachers' Societies in Trieste, is an invaluable source for understanding the policy of hindering operation of Slovene teachers and modes of a gradual curtailment of Slovene

44 This includes activities modelled after those of the Gorizian Splošno žensko društvo (General Women's Association) that was on the basis of the statute entitled to encourage its members children to be involved in recreation and to seek to complement school lessons with teaching Slovene (OZE NŠK, Šolstvo, Ilegalno šolstvo pod fašistično Italijo, 3).

45 OZE NŠK, Šolstvo, 1, *Primorski dnevnik*, 10 May 1970: V usodi Amalije Čok faze trpke zgodovine slovenskega šolstva.

46 OZE NŠK, Šolstvo, 1, Poročilo Amalije Čok, 5 February 1946.

47 OZE NŠK, Šolstvo, 1, Čok A., Trieste, 4 June 1945.

48 OZE NŠK, Šolstvo, 1, Amalija Čok, Trieste, Sv. Ivan.

lessons and final removal of Slovene schools, as well as for exploring Slovene and Croatian responses to a gradual introduction of Italian school legislature. An analysis of this journal shows the organizing of Slovene and Croatian teachers, who strove to establish self-management and seek ways to diminish the consequences of the integration of Slovene and Croatian schools into the Italian school system. It should be mentioned that they sought contacts with Italian teachers, particularly those identifying with the socialist and – after 1921 – the communist party. The journal published political and literary treatises, which were mostly written by socialist writers who demonstrated tendencies to an international and cosmopolitan orientation and were thus favourably disposed towards collaborations with ideologically similar Italian teachers. Its regular reports about the most innovative didactic and pedagogical experiences from different parts of the world, e.g. the USA, UK, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, bear witness to the periodical's aspiration to transcend the local framework and limitations that were imposed by the new political and school authorities. Articles dedicated to the most avant-garde artistic trends, such as futurism, constructivism, zenitism confirm the aspirations of its editorial board and external associates, who distanced themselves from the canons of the bourgeois aesthetic and were favourably disposed towards revolutionary changes and achievements of the Soviet Union. The periodical's ideational and political profile is noted for its radical nature, particularly if compared to the journal of the Triestine teachers' association *Unione magistrale triestina Battaglie per la scuola*, which was first published in Trieste in 1920. This is evident also from the attention that *Učiteljski list* paid to the woman question.

Even though women teachers were not involved in the most important ideological debates,⁴⁹ namely editorial guidelines remained in the domain of men, it can be gathered from reports drawn up by commissions and sections of the Association of Slavic Teachers' Societies that their importance increased, which was confirmed by the growing number of their representatives. In June 1921 a woman delegate was elected alongside five male delegates by the Sežana district Teachers' Society. Women teachers had more delegates representing them in the Postojna Teachers' Society, where 4 representatives were women out of a total of 15 delegates. In Trieste 9 teachers were women out of a total of 26 representatives. The largest number of women representatives, i.e. a half, were elected at the assembly of the Tolmin Teachers' Society.⁵⁰ It is evident from individual reports that women's under-representation caused friction in elections to the association's

49 Two tendencies were present within the association, i.e. the "bourgeois" tendency, liberal and socialist, arguing that teachers cannot exist without basic political culture: "Socialism is no longer the domain of a single party, as it was before the war, it is in the domain of all parties." (*Učiteljski list*, 1 September 1921: Naše stališče, 1).

50 *Učiteljski list*, 16 July 1921: Zborovanje "tolminskega učiteljskega društva", III. In 1924 women outnumbered men in the ranks of delegates.

bodies and increasingly firm demands for equal representation.⁵¹ The ratio of elected men to women in respective teachers' societies varies between one-third or one-quarter of all representatives; however, it grew on a yearly basis, which is particularly noticeable in 1926, when women outnumbered men in a few societies, e.g. in Idrija.⁵² The reason should not be sought solely in women members' ardency but also in the fascist school policy, which was initially directed against the most active male teachers and only with a time delay against active women teachers, although the most active and pro-Yugoslav oriented women teachers were subject to strict control from as early as November 1918 onwards.

T. Kos joined the debate on women's representation at an assembly held in Gorizia in August 1922, when she raised the following questions: "Are women inferior? Are we excluded from taking action? Do we perhaps not contribute to the organization?"⁵³ The dissatisfaction among women teachers stemmed also from the fact that they were usually treasurers and did not have representatives in the association's committee:

*Looking at this set of colleagues, I get happy because I feel as if the organization were afraid of electing women to the committee. Oh, we are probably not mature enough to be able to discuss organizational matters. 400 women members do not have a single woman representative. That is enough. For a woman colleague to sit at a desk where our activities and the operation of our societies are discussed would be too much for a woman's head. A new committee will be elected this year. Dear colleagues, allow us to become part of this committee because we want to have a say in the our fate and in that of the organization.*⁵⁴

That an increasing number of women teachers were not willing to be silent is evident from discussions about the abolishment of women teachers' celibacy and from individual reports published in *Učiteljski list*. Their growing efforts were mentioned also by the editor of *Novi rod* Josip Ribičič, who was convinced that the most active women teachers, "our women", could produce their own journal modelled after *Slovenka*⁵⁵: "There are enough literary educated colleagues among our women teachers, as well as those dealing with women's questions. In good hands a journal cannot fall into passivity. If not possible otherwise, it

51 *Učiteljski list*, 10 August 1922.

52 If we compare the data on women's presence in specific Slovene societies with that in Unione magistrale triestina, we see that women's presence in the years 1920–1921 was similar; in the subsequent years it was higher. Unione magistrale triestina was led solely by men, which was reflected in the periodical *Battaglie per la Scuola*, where subjects, such as women teachers' celibacy, were addressed by men (*Battaglie per la Scuola*, 1 June 1922: Per il diritto e la giustizia!, 3).

53 *Učiteljski list*, 10 August 1922: Delegacijsko zborovanje v Gorici, 177.

54 *Učiteljski list*, 1 July 1923: Naša organizacija in članice, 147.

55 *Slovenka*, the first Slovene women's periodical was published in Trieste from 1897 to 1903 (Verginella, 2017).

should be published under the auspices of the Association. 400 members equals 400 trustees and agitators.”⁵⁶ The Association being confronted with the role of members of specific committees is evident also from the text entitled *Tovarišice so izpregovorile besede* (Women comrades have spoken), which brings up a woman teacher

*as we have not been used to in the rank organization thus far. It happened at the assembly of the Idrija district Teachers' Society, during the discussion about the elections. The event is interesting and cannot be bypassed without addressing the role of women colleagues in the planning, operation and struggle of teachers' organization. [...] It is thus necessary that the greatest women of their time are harbingers of a movement that we see in European women's intellectual circles. Perhaps this effort is not completely crystallized because a woman intellectual is possible firstly and most easily in the ruling bourgeois circles, but it is thus not less true that the Manchester doctrine is hostile to women and the reason for their slavery. [...] If women teachers want to be truly liberated, not seemingly and externally equal and free in the so-called higher strata of the society, Ibsen's Nora will not serve as a model to them, it will be a proletarian woman, who does not sink in the bitterness of public life, who fights the suffering wholeheartedly and believes firmly in better, brighter days.*⁵⁷

The presented ideal of a proletarian woman was in many respects far from values and goals set by the most emancipated women teachers, e.g. Pavla Hočevar, an educator and writer who published her texts in *Učiteljski list* and was one of the most important collaborators of *Ženski svet*, a periodical published in Trieste from 1923 onwards by the society *Žensko dobrodelno udruženje*.⁵⁸ However, it is true that this ideal was becoming increasingly more familiar in the image of a woman fighter who stands up to fascism and the violation of minority rights not only among politically active women teachers, but also among women students attending the Tolmin teachers' training school. On 10 January *Učiteljski list* published an unsigned article that said that a

56 *Učiteljski list*, 1 July 1922: Par misli za delegacijsko zborovanje, 148. The commentary was aimed at the women's periodical *Jadranka*, which was published in Trieste by Marica Gregorič Stepančič from 1921 to 1923.

57 *Učiteljski list*, 10 January 1922: Glas tovarišic, 9.

58 Pavla Hočevar (1889–1972) taught at the private school established by the Sts. Cyril and Methodius Society. She had to relocate to Ljubljana before its closure in 1930 due to her problems with Italian authorities. In her memoirs she wrote about her trips to Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Belgrade in the spring of 1919 to organize rallies in support of the demands voiced by Slovene Littoral women. In the Slovene capital, she sought support among the refugees from the Littoral and in the Office for the Occupied Area; in Zagreb, she appealed to the well-established author Zofka Kveder. Assisted by the Slovene politician and member of parliament Anton Korošec, she came into contact with the organization Kola srpskih sestara in Belgrade (Hočevar, 1969, 108–109).

woman teacher has a double role in the phase of the “decomposition of the society: to defend herself and lift, rebuild the next generation.”⁵⁹ In the same issue we can see a long text about women’s movement well; it was penned by a woman who highlights women’s class belonging, but also the sisterhood of members of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. The former and the latter are disadvantaged in terms of dignity and equality. The author’s concluding theses are exceptional in their radicalness, particularly if compared to other treatises penned by men and women: “Women’s movement is in this extent nothing but operating with ideas. Nowadays violence prevails, which must be fought with violence.”⁶⁰

This thinking stated the dramatic nature of the period and the necessity to find radical solutions, wherefore it deviated from the principles of operation formulated by *Žensko dobrodelno udruženje*. In the first issue of its journal *Ženski svet*, which was published in January 1923, this society brought up the harmfulness of exaggerated competitiveness with men, the necessity of women’s charitable work and activities against debauchery, light-mindedness, and misery which the war left behind. Antonija Slavik,⁶¹ one of the initiators of *Žensko dobrodelno udruženje*, is known to have played a key role in the formation of these principles. Her bourgeois outlook deviated from the socialist and feminist stance of young women teachers and students. In terms of content, she was closer to her Italian fellow citizens, with whom she collaborated in the Red Cross during the war. She believed that Slovene women activists ought to establish a “legal form of assistance — let us found a charitable organization! Fascists might allow that!” (Hočevar, 1969, 121).

The fascisation of the society, the Italianization of schools and closure of Slovene and Croatian schools radicalized the youngest woman teachers, who were subject to systematical dismissals, disciplining, and threats. “Turbulent times have arrived, a time of searching and analyses, a twilight of everything that is philistine, a time of troublesome blows and hardships is here. This is to be expected. No matter is more pressing, as if we would want to lead a patriarchal life in accordance with provisions and official regulations stipulated by law in times such as these.”⁶² However, their ranks witnessed a turn towards the defence of the national and towards tradition, as did the most radical intellectual and artistic circles in the Littoral.

59 *Učiteljski list*, 10 January 1924: O poklicu učiteljice, 9.

60 *Učiteljski list*, 10 January 1924: Nekaj misli o ženskem gibanju, 12.

61 Antonija Lavrenčič (1868–1938) graduated from the teachers’ training school in Gorizia. She was actively involved in the Slovene cultural life in Trieste and wrote for *Edinost*. She was a member of the women’s branch of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Society, the Red Cross, and of the Widows’ and Orphans’ Organization. On her activity during the war cf. Hočevar, 1969, 96.

62 *Učiteljski list*, 15 December 1925: Ob koncu leta, 185.

A commentary expressed by the painter Avgust Černigoj,⁶³ which was published in *Učiteljski list* on the occasion of the art exhibition in the Triestine Giordano pubblico (Sl. Ljudski vrt), and his polemic with the bourgeois canons is telling: “We need impulsive and destructive work, we need to build something new in order to show who we really are. [...] We have to show the world that there is also a Slavic peasant, from whom the new culture, i. e. the new fine arts, can be expected.”⁶⁴

The need to resort to the people and evaluate vernacular culture alleviates the feminist tones and opens the space for evaluating the traditional role of women, who will be able, so to speak, “to regenerate mankind with their gentle knowledge.”⁶⁵ It is not insignificant that this and similar thoughts appeared in *Učiteljski list* only a few months before it was banned, which was not prevented even by the publication of a report from the Fifth Congress of the Fascist Istrian Province. This report suggests that teachers in the Julian March had to become “the spire of Italian piercing into non-native masses. [...] Teachers thus have to feel fascism, regardless of whether they have a membership card or not.”⁶⁶ The period of searching for cohabitation, adjustments and pacts of Slovene teachers with the new school authorities came to an end; this period brought about also greater susceptibility for women’s emancipation and political activities of women teachers.

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

The year 1918 was followed by a several-year-long transition period in the sphere of education in the Julian March, which was marked by the establishment of new national and political priorities in education. Attempting to adjust to the new circumstances and to defy Italianization, the Slovene minority school system introduced new forms of self-organization and intensive political activities. It was particularly Slovene women teachers who intensified their professional and public operation in the transition period also because the post-war period was favourably disposed towards young teachers due to mass migrations of the Slovene and Croatian middle class. Being cut away from Ljubljana, the cultural and political centre, and aversion to the new state and its nationalist politics contributed to searching for foreign models and to the susceptibility to radical trains of thought, also in terms of the

63 Avgust Černigoj, (1898–1985) joined constructivism as a painter and sculptor and was influenced by Bauhaus. From October 1920 to September 1922 he taught art at the Postojna *gimnazija*. He passed the exam for secondary-school teachers of drawing in Bologna (1922). As an illustrator he collaborated with the Triestine periodical *Novi rod*. He left for Munich in the autumn of 1922, where he initially took classes at the academy and then at an art and trade school.

64 *Učiteljski list*, 1 June 1926: Umetniška razstava v Trstu, 87.

65 *Učiteljski list*, 15 July 1926: Sebi, 105.

66 *Učiteljski list*, 1 July 1926: Mrachovo poročilo o šolstvu, 101.

woman question. Following the removal of Slovene schools and expedited fascistization of the society, the ranks of Slovene teachers deviated from emancipatory tendencies, moving towards conservatism and evaluation of women's traditional role, which was in the Italian environment noticeable already in the early 20s.

UČITELJICE V VRTINCU POVOJNIH SPREMEMB
V JULIJSKI KRAJINI (1918–1926)

Marta VERGINELLA

Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta, Aškerčeva 2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija

e-mail: marta.verginella@ff.uni-lj.si

POVZETEK

Članek obravnava spremembe, ki so se dogajale na področju šolstva v Julijski krajini, odnos novih političnih oblasti do šolstva in učnega kadra glede na spol. Na osnovi tiska in arhivskega gradiva analizira politiko italijanskih šolskih oblasti in odzivanje slovenskega in hrvaškega učiteljstva na postopno zapiranje manjšinskih šol, s posebno pozornostjo na položaj in delovanje slovenskih učiteljic in njihov odnos do ženskega vprašanja. Na prehodu iz 19. v 20. stoletje so ženske prevzele čedalje pomembnejšo vlogo v šolstvu v številnih evropskih državah. Od 70. let 19. stoletja so se tudi lahko vpisovale na učiteljišča, ki so od 80. let dalje postala prave varilnice izobraženih deklet, še posebej v tistih državah, kjer je osnovno šolstvo postalo obvezno. Dekletom iz vrst srednjega sloja so dajale možnost pridobitve srednje izobrazbe in večkrat tudi poklicne osamosvojitve. V Italiji in Avstro-Ogrski, podobno kot drugod po Evropi, se je učiteljski poklic močno feminiziral zlasti na prehodu iz 19. v 20. stoletje. Ob koncu prve svetovne vojne je bilo število učiteljic močno v porastu, a njihovo članstvo v stanovskih organizacijah se ni odražalo v večji odločevalni moči. Na področju šolstva v Julijski krajini je bilo tranzicijsko obdobje po letu 1918 zaznamovano z vzpostavitvijo novih šolskih nacionalnih in političnih prioritet. Manjšinsko šolstvo, tako slovensko kot hrvaško, v poskusu prilagajanja novim razmeram in kljubovanja, uvaja oblike samoorganizacije in intenzivnega političnega delovanja. Še posebej slovenske učiteljice okrepijo svoje poklicno delovanje in javno delovanje. Povojni čas je tudi zaradi množičnih odhodov slovenskega in hrvaškega srednjega sloja v Kraljevini SHS naklonjen mlajšemu učiteljstvu. Odrezanost od kulturnega in političnega centra, to je Ljubljane, in nenaklonjenost italijanski državi in njeni nacionalistični politiki, je prispevala k iskanju tujih vzorov in dovzetnosti za radikalne miselne tokove, tudi v zvezi z ženskim vprašanjem. Po ukinitvi slovenskih in hrvaških šol in pospešeni fašizacije družbe pa se tudi v slovenskih učiteljskih vrstah zgodi premik od emancipacionističnih teženj h konservativizmu in ovrednotenju tradicionalne vloge žensk, ki je viden v italijanski družbi že na začetku dvajsetih let.

Ključne besede: učiteljice, Julijska krajina, tranzicija, žensko vprašanje, antifašizem

SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andri, A. & G. Mellinato (1994):** Scuola e confine. Le istituzioni educative della Venezia Giulia 1915–1945. Trieste, Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia.
- Appolonia, A. (2001):** Dagli Asburgo a Mussolini, 1918–1922. Gorizia, Libreria Editrice Goriziana.
- ASTs, CCCTT** – Archivio di Stato di Trieste (ASTs), Commissariato civile per la città di Trieste e Territorio (1919–1922) (CCCTT).
- ASTs, ONAIR** – ASTs, Opera Nazionale Assistenza all’Italia Redenta (ONAIR).
- ASTs, PAST** – ASTs, Provveditorato agli studi di Trieste (PAST).
- Bajc, G. (2016):** Brisanje sledi in moč pozabe. O šoli Bergamas v slovenski stavbi na Montecchijevi ulici. Primorski dnevnik (1 May), 13.
- Bajc, G. (2018):** Interments after the First World War. The case of women in the Northern Adriatic, 1918–1920. *Acta Histriae*, 26, 4, 1017–1040.
- Barbagli, M. (1974):** Disoccupazione intellettuale e sistema scolastico in Italia. Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Barbalič, F. (1918):** Pučke škole u Istri: statistički prikaz prema stanju neposredno pred početkom svjetskog rata. Pulj, Jos. Krmpotića.
- Battaglie per la Scuola.** Trieste. Unione magistrale triestina, 1918–1822.
- Brevi Cenni (1921):** Brevi Cenni sull’azione spiegata dal Governo italiano nella Venezia Giulia dalla data dell’armistizio al Novembre 1920. Trieste, [s.n.].
- Cottone, C. (1938):** Storia della Scuola in Istria: da Augusto a Mussolini. Capodistria, Scuola Tip. Edit. V. Focardi.
- Čermelj, L. (1974):** Sloveni e Croati in Italia tra le due guerre. Trieste, Editoriale Stampa Triestina.
- Debelli Turk, L. (1980):** Učitelji na šentjakobskih Ciril-Methodovih šolah. In: Debelli Turk, L. (ed.): Sv. Jakob. Zgodovinski razgledi po življenju Slovencev v tržaškem delavskem okraju. Trst, Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 92–136.
- De Fort, E. (1981):** L’associazionismo degli insegnanti elementari dall’età giolittiana al fascismo. *Movimento operaio e socialista*, 4, 375–404.
- De Grazia, V. (1992):** How Fascism Ruled Women. Italy, 1922–1945. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, University of California Press.
- Dessardo, A. (2015):** Scuole al limite. L’istruzione primaria in lingua italiana in Alto Adige e nell’Istria interna, 1918–1922. *Qualestoria*, 43, 1 (Grande guerra e scuola), 75–98.
- Dessardo, A. (2018):** Lo spirito nazionale nella scuola. Lettere dalla Venezia Giulia a Giuseppe Lombardo Radice. Trieste, Edizioni Meudon.
- Downs, L. L. (2018):** “The Most Moderate Italianization?” Social Action and Nationalist Politics in the North-Eastern Adriatic Borderlands (1919–1954). *Acta Histriae*, 26, 4, 1087–1102.
- Edinost.** Trst, 1876–1928.

- Engelbrecht, H. (1986):** Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens: Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs. Band 4: Von 1848 bis zum Ende der Monarchie. Vienna, Österreichischer Bundesverlag.
- Ganczer, M. (2017):** The Effects of the Differences between the Austrian and the Hungarian Regulation of the Rights of Citizenship in a Commune (Heimatrecht, Indigenat, Pertinenza, Illetőség) on the Nationality of the Successor States of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. *Journal on European History of Law*, 8, 2, 100–107.
- Hametz, M. (2019):** Statelessness in Italy: The Post-World War I Citizenship Commission in Trieste, *Contemporanea*, 22, 1, 79–96.
- Handrahan, L. (2004):** Conflict, Gender, Ethnicity and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. *Security Dialogue*, 35, 4, 2004, 429–445.
- Hojan, T. (1998):** Slovenske učiteljice ob koncu 19. stoletja. *Šolska kronika*, 7, 31, 132–142.
- Horne, J. (2005):** “Kulturelle Demobilmachung 1919–1939: Ein sinnvoller historischer Begriff?”. In: Hardtwig, W. (ed): *Politische Kulturgeschichte der Zwischenkriegszeit 1919–1939*. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 129–150.
- Kacin Wohinz, M. (1972):** Primorski Slovenci pod italijansko zasedbo, 1918–1921. Maribor, Obzorja.
- Gobatto, E. (2012):** Le donne de “L’Italia Redenta”. L’Opera Nazionale Assistenza Italia Redenta negli anni 1918–1938. In: Vinci, A. M. (ed.): *Carità pubblica, assistenza sociale e politiche di welfare: il caso di Trieste*. Trieste, EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 63–86.
- Hočvar, P. (1969):** Pot se vije, spomini. Trst, Založništvo tržaškega tiska v Trstu.
- I maestri (1922):** I maestri delle Vecchie Province nella Venezia Giulia: quadro della loro situazione tratteggiato da un gruppo di maestri e pubblicato sotto gli auspici della Federazione. Trieste, Federazione Magistrale Giuliana.
- La scuola al confine.** Trieste. Bollettino del R. Provveditorato agli studi per la Venezia Giulia. 1924–26.
- Lavrenčič Pahor, M. (1994):** Primorski učitelji 1914–1941. Prispevek k proučevanju zgodovine slovenskega šolstva na Primorskem. Trst, Narodna in študijska knjižnica, Odsek za zgodovino.
- Milharčič Hladnik, M. (1995):** Šolstvo in Učiteljice na Slovenskem, Ljubljana, Sophia.
- OZE NŠK, Šolstvo –** Odsek za zgodovino in etnografijo Narodne in študijske knjižnice, Trst (OZE NŠK), Šolstvo.
- Pillon, L. (2005):** La sezione italiana dell’Istituto magistrale femminile di Gorizia. In: Tul, V. (ed.): *Učiteljice v šolskih klopeh: Zbornik ob 130. obletnici ustanovitve Slovenskega učiteljskega društva za dekleta v Gorici*. Nova gorica, Pokrajinski arhiv, 139–160.
- Prinčič, V. (2020):** Sternthal zadnja postaja. 1918–1922, Trnava pot povratka gorjskih beguncev. Trst, Iz domačega panja, Založništvo Tržaškega Tiska.
- Purini, P. (2013):** Metamorfosi etniche. I cambiamenti di popolazione a Trieste, Gorizia, Fiume e in Istria. 1914–1975. Udine, Kappa Vu.

- Rolandi, F. (2020):** Un trionfo mai richiesto? Partecipazione politica femminile e rappresentazioni di genere nella stampa locale di Fiume e Sušak dopo la Grande guerra. *Italia contemporanea*, 293, 73–98.
- Sharp, I. & M. Stibbe (2011):** *Aftermaths of War: Women's Movements and Female Activists, 1918–1923*. Leiden, Boston, Brill.
- Sistoli Paoli, N. (2009):** *Gemma Harasim. L'impegno educativo. Antologia di scritti su cultura, scuola, famiglia*. Roma, Aracne.
- Sofri, A. (2019):** *Il martire fascista*. Palermo, Sellerio Editore Palermo.
- Soldani, S. (1993):** *Nascita della maestra elementare*. In: Soldani, S. & G. Turi (eds): *Fare gli italiani. Scuola e cultura nell'Italia contemporanea*. Bologna, Il Mulino, 67–130.
- Tognon, G. (1990):** *Benedetto Croce alla Minerva. La politica scolastica italiana tra Caporetto e la marcia su Roma*. Brescia, La scuola.
- Tul, V. (2005):** *Slovensko izobraževališče za učiteljice v Gorici*. In: Tul, V. (ed.): *Učiteljice v šolskih klopeh: Zbornik ob 130. obletnici ustanovitve Slovenskega učiteljskega združenja za dekleta v Gorici*. Nova Gorica, Pokrajinski arhiv, 111–137.
- Učiteljski list**. Trst, 1920–1926.
- Vašte, I. (1964):** *Podobe iz mojega življenja*. Ljubljana, Mladinska knjiga.
- Verginella, M. (2008):** *Drugi tržaški proces*. In: Kacin Wohinz, M. & M. Verginella: *Primorski upor fašizmu 1920–1941*. Ljubljana, Slovenska matica, 259–350.
- Verginella, M. (ed.) (2017):** *Slovenka: prvi ženski časopis 1897–1902*. Ljubljana, Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete, Beletrina.
- Visintin, A. (1991):** *Disagio militare e attivismo rivoluzionario nel primo dopoguerra giuliano. 1919–1920*. Ronchi dei Legionari, Centro Culturale Pubblico Polivalente.