

Univerza v Ljubljani
Filozofska fakulteta



DISMEMBERED SLOVENIA

1948

Kornelija Ajlec and Božo Repe

1834

1765

MDXXII

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HISTORIA 40

ZNANSTVENA ZBIRKA

ODDELKA ZA ZGODOVINO FILOZOFSKE FAKULTETE UNIVERZE V LJUBLJANI

Dismembered Slovenia

Kornelija Ajlec and Božo Repe

Ljubljana 2023

Dismembered Slovenia

Zbirka Historia; 40

ISSN 1408-3957 (Tiskana izd.) in ISSN 2712-388X (Spletna izd.)

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Published by: Založba Univerze v Ljubljani (University of Ljubljana Press)

For the publisher: Gregor Majdič, rektor Univerze v Ljubljani/rector of the University of Ljubljana

Issued by: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, (University of Ljubljana Press, Faculty of Arts)

For the issuer: Mojca Schlamberger Brezar, dekanja Filozofske fakultete/Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana

Printed by: Birografika Bori, d. o. o.

Ljubljana, 2023

First edition

Number of copies printed: 150

Price: 19,90 EUR



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The book was published with support from the Slovenian Research Agency.

First e-edition. Digital copy of the book is available on: <https://e-knjige.ff.uni-lj.si/>

DOI: 10.4312/9789612970864

Katalogna zapisa o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v
Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

Tiskana knjiga
COBISS.SI-ID=144325379
ISBN 978-961-297-089-5

E-knjiga
COBISS.SI-ID=144143875
ISBN 978-961-297-086-4 (PDF)

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Foreword*

Despite the abundant bibliography, totalling almost 13,000 units, occupation borders in Slovene ethnic territory during World War II have only been dealt with in part in the literature. Thus far, historians have paid most attention to diplomatic decisions, and in specific segments also to on-site negotiations. In Slovenia, the question of occupation borders was most often addressed by Tone Ferenc,¹ while in the period of Yugoslavia this subject was dealt with by several historians, including Ferdo Čulinović, who penned the first book on the question at hand, one that is still regarded as a fundamental work.² In the countries that were once part of former Yugoslavia, the bulk of related resources are kept in the Military History Institute in Belgrade, which also keeps many valuable microfilms from foreign, particularly German, archives. Key archives for diplomacy-related issues linked to this subject are part of the national archives of the former occupying states, whereby it should be pointed out that in the case of Germany these were transferred from Bonn to Berlin after German reunification. This transfer does not pose a problem, as the research reported here has shown that documents can be traced. Naturally, some materials are also kept in Slovene archives.

This monograph, like others in the occupation borders collection, builds upon the research entitled *Make This Land German ... Italian ... Hungarian ... Croatian! The Role of*

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This study was produced in the scope of the national research project *Make This Land German ... Italian ... Hungarian ... Croatian! The Role of Occupation Borders in the Denationalization Policy and Lives of the Slovene Population* (J6-8248), which was financed by the Slovenian Research Agency.

1 Inter alia: Ferenc, *Okupacijski sistemi v Sloveniji 1941–1945*; Ferenc, *Nacistična in raznarodovalna politika v Sloveniji v letih 1941–1945*; Ferenc, *Aneksionistična in raznarodovalna politika okupatorjev v Sloveniji*; Ferenc, *Okupacijski sistemi med drugo svetovno vojno. 1. Razkosanje in aneksionizem*; Ferenc, *Okupacijski sistemi med drugo svetovno vojno. 2. Raznarodovanje*; Ferenc, *Okupacijski sistemi med drugo svetovno vojno. 3. Nasilje in izkoriščanje gmotnih sil za potrebe okupatorskih držav*; Ferenc, *Nacistična politika denacionalizacije u Sloveniji u godinama od 1941 do 1945*; Ferenc, *Système d'occupation des Nazis en Slovenie*; itd.

2 Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*.

Occupation Borders in the Denationalization Policy and the Lives of the Slovene Population, which is popularly referred to simply as *Occupation Borders*³ and was financed by the Slovenian Research Agency. This three-year research project (which was extended for another year without additional financing) addressed the subject comprehensively from several viewpoints. Structurally speaking, it consisted of several stages.

Stage I included: 1. an overview of the division of the Slovene territory on the highest diplomatic level and the related international treaties that were based on the principle of the debellation of Yugoslavia; 2. an exploration of the territory's military occupation and marking out the occupied space on location, where occasional conflicts occurred between occupiers that were otherwise allies; 3. examining the concrete delineation of borders on the basis of border commissions; and, 4. a survey of modes of fortifying borders. In doing so, we were able to detect common characteristic features and differences between these borders and respective occupiers' border regimes.

Stage II of the research was conducted on location. Joint historical and geographical work resulted in an exact calculation of the entire length of all borders, i.e. 665.5 km.

The border between Germany and Italy was the longest, totalling almost 277 km or almost 42% of all occupation borders. It was followed by the border between Italy and the NDH (*Neodvisna država Hrvatska* – Independent State of Croatia) (172 km or 26%), Germany and the NDH (133 km or 20%), Germany and Hungary (83 km or 13%). Slightly more than half the length (51.3%) ran along Slovenia's modern-day borders, while slightly less than half (48.7%) ran within modern-day Slovenia. The longest border running within the boundaries of modern-day Slovenia was that between Germany and Italy, i.e. 264 km or 95% of the border. The remaining borders had a higher share of the border that corresponds to present-day borders: Italy and the NDH 171 km (99%), Germany and the NDH 115 km (86%), Germany and Hungary 44 km (52%).⁴

3 The Facebook page used for disseminating research procedures and results bears the same name: <https://www.facebook.com/OkupacijskeMeje/>. All eyewitness testimonies and other materials compiled thus far are available on the website and on YouTube. For a list of interviews and documentary recordings – totalling 311 at the present, with additional ones still being added – see the playlist *Videoposnetki pri projektu Okupacijske meje* (accessed: March 2021). For research results thus far see: <https://okupacijskemeje.si/results.html>. Along with the aforementioned results, these also include a published bibliography; exhibitions that were displayed in Slovenia and abroad (*Border Stones, Barbed Wire, Watchtowers and Minefields. Life along the Occupation Borders in Slovenia, 1941–1945; Occupation Borders in Slovenia 1941–1945; Rogaska Slatina as a Border Town of the Third Reich; Idrija and Žiri as a Border Area 1941–1945; Vinceremo, We Shall See: Occupation Borders in Bela Krajina 1941–1945; Occupied Ljubljana: A City along the Border; Our Barn Was in Germany, Our House in Hungary*, all of which were bilingual, i.e. Slovene and English, barring that about the occupation borders in Prekmurje, which was trilingual, i.e. Slovene-Hungarian-English; all these exhibitions can be viewed online and can be retrieved from <https://okupacijskemeje.si/>); lectures and an online symposium. On top of that, the research group produced a 51-minute documentary entitled *Vinceremo, We Shall See* about the border in Bela Krajina, which had over 1900 views.

4 Matija Zorn, Rok Ciglič, Primož Gašperič: "State Borders in the Territory of Slovenia during World War II". In *Occupation Borders*, p. 216. This article provides a detailed description of methods and cartographic sources, as well as other materials used to obtain spatial data. Geographers produced detailed maps of all occupation borders



Fig. 1: The student Maruša Nartnik working on location, next to the section boundary stone that was identified in the Polhov Gradec dolomites in May 2018.

Table 1: Size of occupied areas in the territory of the former Drava Banovina.⁵

Occupying state	Area (km ²)	Share (%)
Germany	10,291.0	64.85
Italy (the Province of Ljubljana)	4,621.2	29.12
Hungary	943.6	5.95
NDH	12.0	0.08
Total	15,867.8	100

featured in our exhibitions or publications. Members of the research group from the GIAM ZRC SAZU were Matija Zorn, Mateja Breg Valjavec, Rok Ciglič, Mateja Ferk, Primož Gašperič, Matjaž Geršič, Mauro Hrvatin, Drago Kladnik, Manca Volk Bahun, and Jure Tičar. Historians, members of the research group, coming from the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, and the Institute of Contemporary History included Božo Repe, Kornelija Ajlec, Bojan Balkovec, Jožef Božidar Flajšman, Aleš Gabrič, Bojan Godeša, Darja Kerec, Peter Mikša, and Maja Vehar. Attila Kovács from the Institute for Ethnic Studies participated in the team as an external associate. Students from the Department of History participated in the project as well, e.g. some of them in the scope of seminars in the academic years 2017/18 and 2018/19 and others more intensely as part of student part-time work. These include Matevž Šlabnik, Blaž Štangelj, and Daniel Siter, who co-created respective local exhibitions; Marko Berkovič, Domen Kaučič, Lea Knez, Tjaša Konovšek, Jernej Komac, Tadej Madjar, and Maruša Nartnik, who conducted interviews on location, as well as Ivan Smiljanič, who did some research work in archives.

5 “State Borders in the Territory of Slovenia during World War II”, p. 220 (Table 3).

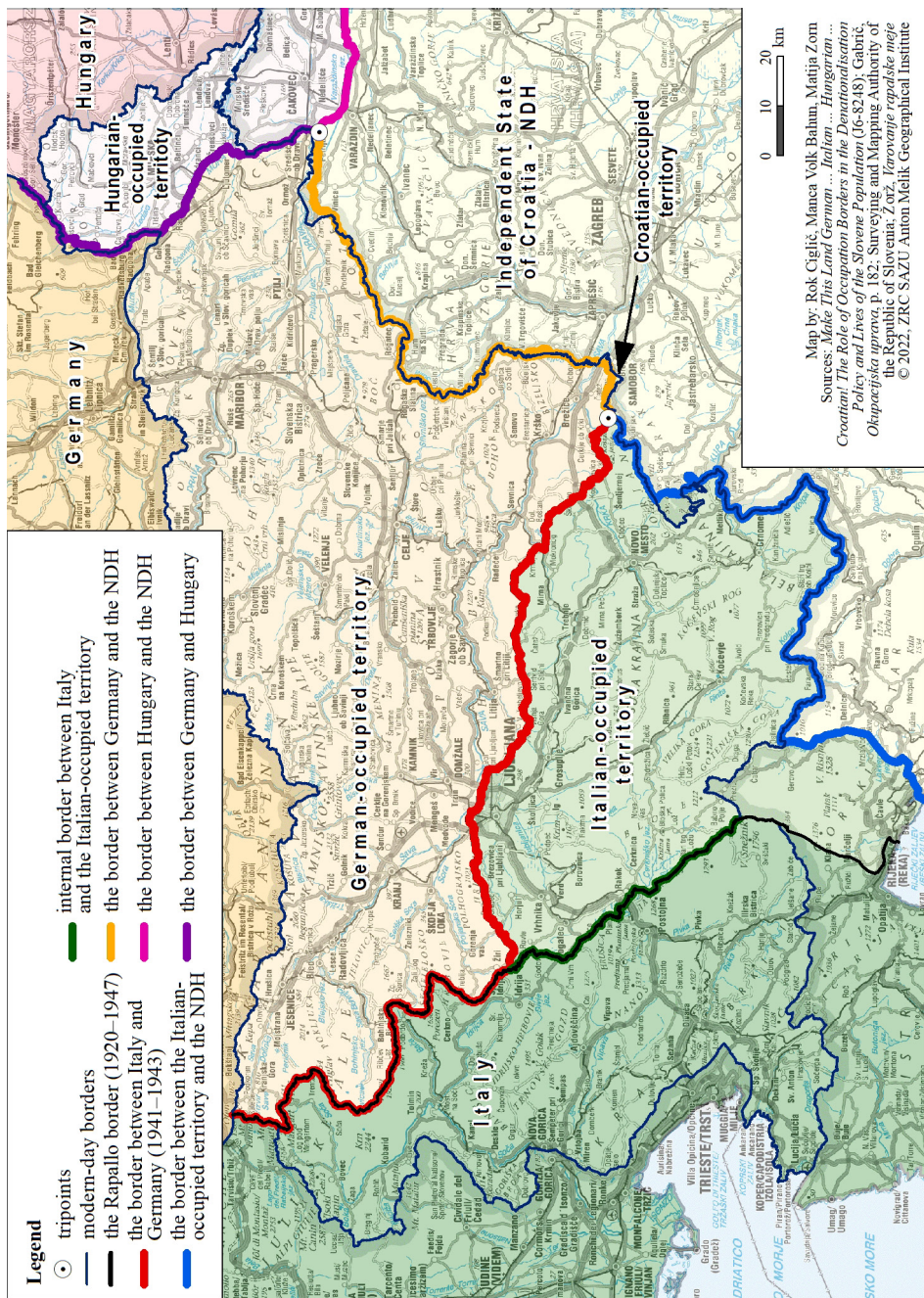


Fig. 2: Occupation borders in Slovenia's territory 1941–1943.

A team of geographers identified the course of the border by transferring maps showing the delimitation (diplomatic, military and other maps) to the Global Positioning System. Both parts of the research group, i.e. geographers and historians, traced these borders on site, marking them out and identifying their remnants. Students were actively involved in the research and on-site work, and some of them co-authored exhibitions and publications. A group of students analysed reports about the state of affairs in schools during the occupation, which gave us valuable data about occupation borders and life along them.⁶ An app that will enable users to trace the occupation borders and remnants thereof is still in its infancy. (<https://useful-sun-5466.glideapp.io/>)

Phase III was dedicated to the systematic collection of testimonials,⁷ their processing, preparation for publication, and analysis. The interviewees belonged mostly to the last living wartime generation that witnessed occupation borders as children. In many cases this was the last opportunity to record their memories because, sadly, a few interviewees have since passed away.

With the aforementioned methods, and a few others, the project about the occupation borders has pioneered so-called public history in Slovenia, a method that is becoming one of the central methodological approaches in historiography worldwide. The pandemic increased the importance of this methodology, placing it the centre of historiography as a bridge between classical research methods on the one side and the interested institutions and the public on the other. By way of online tools and publishing results in real time, we have created a network of researchers, different institutions that present history visually (museums, libraries, galleries, etc.), educational institutions (particularly primary and secondary schools), local authorities, forestry services, civil society (e.g. the Union of the Associations for the Values of the National Liberation Movement of Slovenia) and, particularly, with the local population on site. Additionally, this type of interaction forced us to also present scientific results in a popular manner that is interesting both visually and in terms of content, as well as in forms and in lengths that are tailored to today's online tools, and, last but not least, teaching. Being an upgrade of "pure" science, public history has brought immense popularity to the research at hand, which manifests itself, *inter alia*, with more than 2,000 followers on the project's Facebook page, where specific posts have between a few hundred to a few thousand views. Our most popular post had been viewed almost 17,000 times by February 2021.

This universal approach has outlined at least a rough historical picture that conveys the occupation borders' importance for the fate of Slovenes. Regardless of where you live in Slovenia, you can reach on foot and within a few hours one of the five border areas or

6 *Analiza šolskih poročil o stanju šol v času okupacije 1941–1945 na Slovenskem.*

7 Three hundred and eleven videos of different lengths, ranging from a few minutes to almost an hour, have been uploaded to the YouTube playlist *Okupacijske meje*. The playlist, along with keywords, can be retrieved from *Videoposnetki pri projektu Okupacijske meje*.

19. 10. 1946 Polhov Gradec
447 21
2

Podatki o dogodkih na šolah za časa
domovinske vojne

I. Stanje na šoli tik pred pričetkom vojne (z dne 31. marca 1941):

1. Šola je bila 8 razredna in sicer ima vsakdanjo šolo in šolo za oddaljene otroke. Prva ošega je obsegala 5 oddelkov, druga pa 2, skupno 7 oddelkov.
2. Na šoli je bilo vpisanih 166 dečkov in 143 deklic, skupno 367 otrok.
3. Na šoli je bilo tedaj 7 učiteljstva, 2 moška in 5 žensk.
4. Učiteljska knjižnica je štela 251 knjig, a šolarska 108 knjig.
5. Šolsko poslopje je bilo v slabem stanju, mnogo premajhno in ni ustrezalo higijskim predpisom.

II. Šola v teku domovinske vojne:

1. Šolsko poslopje je ostalo celo. Poškodovan se je deloma le šolski inventar: klopi, stoli, mize, zidovje, vrata in okna. V eni učilnici manjka okrog 30 šip. Pobili so jih vojniki italijanske vojske in Vaške straže.
2. Šolsko poslopje je v splošnem bilo uporabljano za pouk. Le nekaj časa so v njem stanovale italijanske čete in Vaška straža (BG).
3. Pouk se je vso dobo vršil z izjemo nekaj mesev prekinitve. Poučevalo se je le v slovenskem jeziku, nemščina in italijanščina sta se poučevali deloma neobvezno in kot stranski predmet. Za pouk nemščine se je uporabljala: Nemška vadnica I. del. (Južnič in Kolaric) Italijanščina pa se ni poučevala po nobeni knjigi. Za slovenščino, srbohrvaščino in računstvo pa so se uporabljale iste knjige kakor v dobi pred okupacijo in sicer:

Flere: Naša prva knjiga.	Černivec: Računice: Prvi del
Gangl: Druga čitanka	" Drugi del
Černež: Tretja čitanka,	" Tretji del
Rape: Četrta čitanka	" Četrty del
Flere: Peta čitanka	" Peti del
Lesica: Mole: prva srbska čitanka (1. in 2. del)	

4. Okupatorski učitelji v naš kraj ni bilo.
V začetku okupacije so službovali na šoli sledeči učitelji:

Clemente Edvin, šol. upr.	Bučar Nikolaja
Ašič Alojzija	Kleinstejn Ana
Clemente Stanislava	Trpin Stefan
Česnik Marija	

Tekom okupacije pa so bili na šolo še nastavljeni:

Dolinar Ivan, žvan Andrej, Kraker Marija in Počkaj Leopoldina, Kotnik M.

Med okupacijo sta bila prestavljena v pisarno sreskega načelstva Trpin Stefan in Česnik Marija, žvan pa je odšel v službo pri železnici. Prestavljena na šolo v Mostah je bila tudi Počkaj Leopoldina. Dva mesca po osvoboditvi je odšel z naše šole Dolinar Ivan, 6 mesev po osvoboditvi pa Kotnik Marija.

5. Knjižnici učiteljska in šolarska sta ostali celi. Nove okupator ni ustanavljal.

6. Usoda mladine med okupacijo:

- a) Od sovražnika ni bil preseljen noben otrok.
- b) Od sovražnika ni bil ubit noben otrok.
- c) Postopanje sovražnika z otroki, ki so ostali na licu mesta.
Našo šolsko občino sta hkratu zasedla oba okupatorja: Nemec in Italijan. Pod Nemca so prišle sledeče vasi: Del Setnice, del Setnice, Selo (v celoti) in 3 hiše Polhovega Gradca. Nemška oblast je silila otroke naštetih vasi, da so hodili v Črni vrh k nemškemu pouku. Ne more se ravno trditi, da je z njimi postopal brezobzirno, ker so jih spočetka hoteli pridobiti le z lepa.
- d) Šolski obisk pouka v Črnem vrhu je bil vsak dan slabši. Prvi strah in tudi prvo navdušenje redkih domačih izdajalcev do nemške oblasti se je hitro poleglo. Zato je bil obisk vidno pešal.
- e) Okupator v naš kraj ni pripeljal nobene nemške družine.
7. Bivši jugoslovanski učitelji, ki so bili 31. 3. 1941 na šoli: (14)

- a) Nobeden od učiteljev se ni sam umaknil, pač pa je bil tov. Trpin Stefan mobiliziran, ujet in odpeljan najprej v nemško, nato pa v italijansko ujetništvo.
- b) Vsi ostali so ostali ves čas na svojem mestu, razen Česnikove, ki je bila prestavljena v pisarno okrajnega glavarstva v Ljubljani in Clemente Edvina, ki je bil odpeljan v internacijo in se je vr-

- nil na šolo šele jeseni 1944. Od učiteljstva došlega na šolo med okupacijo pa je bil zaprt in odveden na prisilno delo Dolinar Ivan.
- c) Okupator ni preselil nobenega učitelja. V internacijo sta bila odpeljana Clemente Edvin in Dolinar Ivan. Njima se privatna imovina ni pobrala.
- 8) O internaciji glej zgoraj! Pri NOV in POJ ni služil noben učitelj. Kot simpatizerji osvobodilne fronte so bili na šoli skoraj vsi učitelji: Pučar Nikolaja, Clemente Edvin, Clemente Stanislava, Česnik Marija, Trpin Stefan, Zvan Andrej in Dolinar Ivan, Kraker Marija, Kotnik Marija. Po svojih močeh so tudi podpirali narodnoosvobodilno gibanje.
8. Težki udarci, ki so zadeli tukajšnje prebivalce. Streljanje talcev: 15, 4 in še posameznike, skupno nad 20. Nad 200 domačinov fantov in mož je bilo odvedenih v internacijo. Ena tretjina teh se še ni vrnila. Mnogo onih, ki so se vrnili iz internacije, je bilo prisiljenih stopiti k domobrancem. Ob osvoboditvi pa so morali oditi preko meje naše države in si s tem nakopali gorje sebi in svoji družini.
9. Ljudje so podpirali partizanske akcije večina le bolj izven sedeža domobranske posadke, torej po hrabih in v Babni gori, Dvoru, Dolenji vasi. Prav v Polhovem Gradcu pa so bili simpatizerji OF prav redko posejani. Le nekaj bolj pogumnih in zavednih je podpiralo partizane s hrano in obleko in vršilo obveščevalno službo. Pri ustanovitvi vaške zaščite so bili zlasti udeleženi: Petrovec Anton, Petrovec Jože, železnikar Cene in Jože, Plestenjak Franci, Završan Lovro, Božnar Franc, Malovrh Janez in drugi. Tudi v našem kraju je prišlo do borb: V Prosci, Na Belem, v Velkem Vrhcu. Izvršen je bil tudi napad na italijansko posadko v Polhovem Gradcu, ki pa se ni posrečil.
10. Okupator je zapustil naš kraj 7. maja 1945 in sicer brez boja. Domobranci in Nedičevci so delali prejšnji dan propagando, s katero so marsikoga zbegali, da je odšel z njimi, čeprav ni imel nikake krivde in se mu ne bi bilo treba bati osvobodilne vojske. Okupatorjevih priseljencev v tem kraju ni bilo.
11. Metode okupatorja za potujševanje mladine. Ob prihodu je okupator delal z domačini zelo obzirno in jih je hotel pridobiti na svojo stran z lepo besedo in s tem, da jim je nudil razne ugodnosti. Italijani so po vseh šolskih ustanovljali šolske kuhinje (Gill). Organizacije GILL pa na šoli vendar ni bilo treba ustanoviti. Silili so sicer otroke, da se vpišejo, pa je ostalo popolnoma brez uspeha. Nemci pa so nudili ljudem velike množine racionaliranih živil, dobili so znatno večje količine sladkorja kakor kraji zasedeni ~~pa~~ od Italijanov ali kraji po Gorenjskem. V propagandne svrhe se pa okupator ni poslužil nobenega tečaja, predavanja ali knjig. Bilo je nekaj političnih govorov v cerkvi in zunaj cerkve, protikomunistično zborovanje, nekaj kinopredstav in skioptičnih slik iz življenja v Spaniji, kar vse je bilo naperjeno proti narodno osvobodilni fronti, proti Rusiji, komunizmu ~~etd~~. Propaganda se je vršila tudi potem časopisja in brošur. Zlasti strupen je bil Slovenski dom in Slovenski domobranec, katerega so ljudje kupovali v velikih množinah gredeč iz cerkve vsako nedeljo.
- III. Stanje šole do leta 1945 15. oktobra 1945.
1. Šola je bila 8 razredna, oddelkov je imela 8,6 vsakdanje šole in 2 gorske šole.
 2. Tedaj je bilo vpisanih v šolo 223 dečkov in 146 deklic, skupaj torej 369.
 3. Na šoli je bilo učiteljstva samo 6,1 moški in 5 žensk.
 4. Učiteljska knjižnica šteje 535 knjig in šolarska 157 knjig.
 5. Stanje šolskega poslopja je slabo. Primerjaj točko 1/5.
 6. Pouk se vrši v šolskem poslopju.
 7. Za pouk bo treba urediti samo še eno učilnico, kjer manjka približno 30 šip, ki so jih pobili Italijani oz. Vaška straža (BG).
 8. Šoli najbolj manjka primernih prostorov. Tudi inventar je slab. Treba bi bilo tudi prisiliti starše, da v redu pošiljajo otroke k pouku. Sedaj jih zelo pogosto uporabljajo za delo in izigravajo šolske predpise. Uvedejo naj se za neopravičene zamude zopet sankcije, kakor je bilo svoj čas že uvedeno.
- IV. Materiala navedenega v okrožnici, ni mogoče priskrbeti, ker ga prvič ni bilo, ali se je uničil ali pa je na šoli inventariziran in za muzej nima pomena, ker ni v njih razvideti nobenih značilnosti za pouk v okupacijski dobi. Na šolo je med okupacijo prišlo nekaj številke mlinskega lista Naš list in Slovenske mladine. Te številke pa so bile takoj ob osvoboditvi požgane. Učila in slike izvirajo še iz dobe predaprilske Jugoslavije in za dostavljanje muzeju ~~ima~~ ne bi prišle v poštev.

SLOVENSKA
Oddelisk za osnovne šole
Siev. 263 Dne 21. VIII. 1946
LJUBLJANA

Šola: Preloka
Okraj: Črnomelj
Okrožje: Novo mesto

DRŽAVNA OSNOVNA ŠOLA
Siev. 110/2
18. VIII. 1946
PRELOKA

447
2

Prilazki o dogodkih na šoli na časa domovinske vojne.

I. Pred pričetkom vojne je bila šola tinarredna. V šolo je bilo vpisanih 76 učencev in 62 učenk, skupaj 138. Na šoli sta bili dve učni moči. Šolarna knjižnica je imela 150 knjig, učiteljska pa 260 knjig.

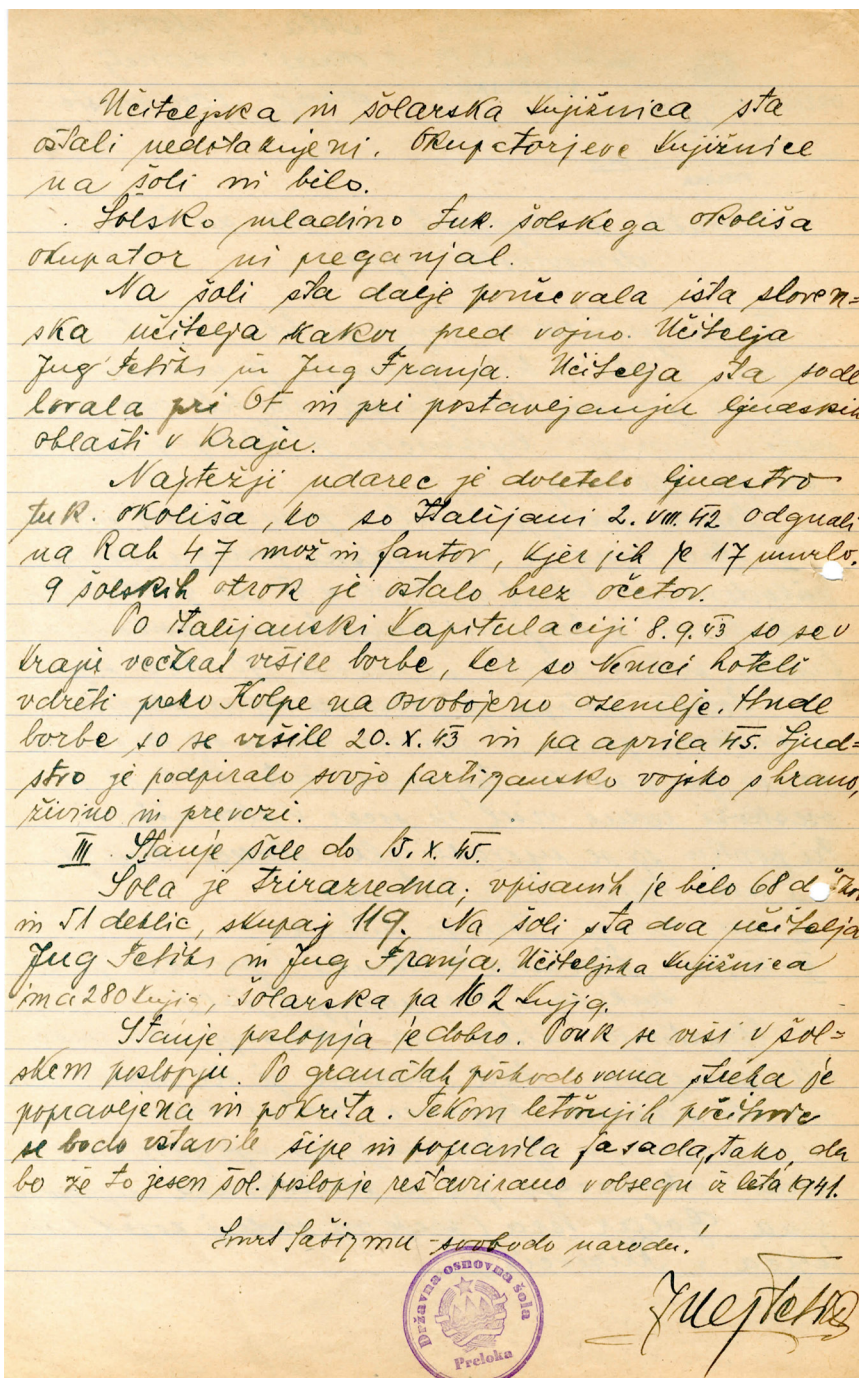
Šolsko poslopje je bilo v prav dobrem stanju.

II. Med vojno je bilo šolsko poslopje delno poškodovano. Vpneč od 15.-30. IV. 45. so ga obstreljevali Nemci s težjimi granatami, poškodovali fasado, prebili streho in razbili 170 okon. žip.

Šolsko poslopje je skori vsa vojna služilo storinskemu pomku in jejmo 14 dni od 10.-24. IV. 45, ko so ga razdele Italjanske čete. Pomk se je vsekovi redno vršil in sicer v slovensčini. Pri pomku so se uporabljale slovenske knjige:

I par.: Stele: Prva čitanka,
I par.: Gangel: Druga čitanka,
II-V par.: Slovenska čitanka (priredba po čitanki pa I par. sedanjih šol).

Okupatorski učitelji na tukajšnji šoli niso bili nameščeni. Med okupacijo je bil nameščen na šolo štajerski begunec Golar Emanuel (preje in sedaj v Ljubljani), po njegorem odhodu v internacijo pa je služborala njegova žena Golar Vera (preje in sedaj zopet učiteljica v Križevcih).



Figs. 3–6: School chronicles (primary schools in Polhov Gradec and Preloka) that describe the position of schools and the lives of the population during the occupation.

borders that left their mark on the lives of the wartime and post-war generations. However, no in-depth research can provide a rational explanation for justifying the madness of those who dragged boundary stones, weighing a few dozen kilograms, to 2,000-metre high mountains or mountain passes that are barely accessible to well-versed mountaineers, or to install barbed-wire fences, whose remnants were identified beneath snow and rocks in the alpine world. What ideology can make a nation mark any space in such an irrational manner? A space that is supposed to belong to it for centuries but crumbles in blood and flames within a few years? The material remnants of these borders are visible signs of such behaviour. They are nature's wounds that have not yet healed, even after decades, and they are joined by the wounds of people and their fates. A view of history from the bottom-up shows the history of individuals whose lives were shaped by great players' decisions and who – provided that they were not resettled – had to live along the newly established or fortified borders that were outlined by the occupiers. They tried to sustain themselves by secretly crossing these borders, working their land on the other side, by smuggling, looking for a *modus vivendi* with the occupiers and their collaborators on the one hand, and the partisans on the other.

Life along the occupation borders brought about thousands of stories, both tragic and comical, seemingly small but also often deplorable and sometimes brave – everything that mankind is capable of. With the exploration of occupation borders, we not only confirmed the extent of the occupiers' ethnocidal and genocidal operation, we also demonstrated it through people's lives and feelings. The altered demographic and national structure of the Slovene territory,⁸ as well as the oppressors' other activities, became evident by means of bottom-up history and through a comprehensive examination of occupation borders. There was no room for Slovenes on the map of new, Nazi Europe, where the German Reich extended from Norway's North Cape, to the last Greek island, and from Moscow to the Channel Islands. Unburdened by any ideology that is otherwise typical of the exploration of World War II in Slovenia, Europe and the world over, the research results provide a realistic insight into the enormous effort and energy required for Slovenes' survival and resistance. Slovenes organized their resistance movement, became part of the Yugoslav resistance movement and of the anti-fascist coalition, and thus survived as a nation and began to create their state with the partisan movement even during the war.

8 For instance, as a consequence of the deportation of the Slovene population from northern Dolenjska, the regions of Posavje and Obsotelje along the border with Croatia, as well as, in part, from areas situated along the Italian-German border. This was followed by the settlement of the German population in a strip of land extending 100 km in length and 25 km in width.

Borders in the Past, Borders in the Present

Even though the modern concept of state borders as exact lines of separation and convergence was only formalized with the emergence of nation states and the global economy in the 19th century, its foundations had been shaped in the preceding centuries. As maintained by Mojtabeh-Zadeh, there is evidence that ancient civilizations associated the concept of the state with the concept of territory and with that of boundaries.⁹

Roman *limites* ran from the British Isles to modern-day Ukraine. To protect them, Romans built numerous walls and forts, garrisoned by soldiers who defended the border, collected customs dues and maintained border structures. Located on the other side of the world, the Great Wall of China had a very similar function. In Egypt, territorial boundaries were marked with pillars, statues and inscriptions, and a system of forts and customs posts was also built.¹⁰ Nevertheless, ancient boundaries should not be ascribed all the characteristics of modern-day borders, since they were not outlined in detail on maps because cartography was not well developed. Moreover, posts and walls were, for the most part, erected selectively. If ancient state formations fortified their boundaries in one area, their other borders had to remain open because none of them had sufficient means or manpower to guard them.

Thus neither Roman *limites* nor the Great Wall of China were a monolithic border; they were a set of walls, with extensive open and mostly unprotected territories lying between them. These walls and forts were built strategically in spots that saw incursions of hostile tribes or were set along the main trade routes that the authorities wanted to control. Borders could be crossed and were not outlined in detail; only small sections of the border were marked by a wall. These were mainly border areas that were not clearly bounded.¹¹

9 Mojtabeh-Zadeh, "Boundary' in Ancient Persian Tradition of Statehood", 51.

10 Koyano, *The Concept of Borders or Frontiers, and their Geographical Locations in Ancient Egypt*; Lovell, *The Great Wall. China Against the World 1000 BCAD 2000*; Whittaker, *Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study*.

11 Whittaker, *Roman Empire*, 71.

Following the fall of ancient Rome, approximately between the years 500 and 1500 AD, Europe was covered with a complex state system that often included various overlapping territorial structures, e.g. duchies, counties, principalities, kingdoms, empires, free cities, and so on. None of these forms outpowered others, and the balance of power – and thus borders – was subject to frequent changes. This was associated with the power of a specific ruler that occupied and lost territories.¹² Rulers often held land in other kingdoms, but this was not bounded by a clearly defined delimitation. It was bounded by the respective villages, towns or cities belonging to them. The control of these areas or people inhabiting them was more important than the control of a specific piece of land.¹³ People were thus not attached to the ruler's entire territory, and their local identity was strong and often limited to their place of residence or to the province.¹⁴ The nobility also imagined their frequently changing territorial framework in the context of inheritance, marriage and warfare rather than as an inviolable, bounded territorial structure. The boundaries between one's property and the invisible boundaries between social classes and the confession of faith were far more important in the Middle Ages.¹⁵ There are indications in some sources that the concept of linear territorial boundaries existed in the Middle Ages as well, but for the most part these were not transferred in the physical world, meaning that they were not of much consequence in the reality of people's everyday lives.¹⁶ More specifically, the Middle Ages is an epoch marked by too much unrest for any marking, boundary stone or moat to survive a longer period of time, and sieges of cities, towns or villages garnered more attention than trespassing upon bounded land.¹⁷

In the late Middle Ages, in the 13th and 14th centuries, when powerful rulers refused to share their authority over a part of some territory, permeable borders were replaced by clearly defined lines on maps that were gradually transferred on the ground.¹⁸ However, it was not until the Peace of Westphalia¹⁹ was signed in 1648 that the foundations of modern borders were truly laid. This introduced the concept of the equality of states based on the principle of exclusive sovereignty over a territory delimited by

12 Anderson, *The Shifting Stage of Politics*.

13 Ruggie, *Territoriality and Beyond*.

14 Heffernan, *The Meaning of Europe*; Vincent, *Theories of the State*.

15 Murphy, *Humanitarian Intervention*.

16 Sahlins, *Boundaries*.

17 Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering*, 33.

18 Ibid., 33–34.

19 The Peace of Westphalia is the collective name for two peace treaties that were signed on 24 October 1648 in Münster and Osnabrück and concluded the Thirty Years' War. Broadly speaking, the Peace of Westphalia marked the beginning of the secularization of the international law.

borders.²⁰ In other words, by formalizing territorial demarcation²¹ European states became increasingly more centralized and defined as specific spatial units that demanded absolute control over everything that was encircled by their territorial boundaries. Therefore, both in political comprehension and international law, the concept of clearly defined delimitation lines was developed, with these separating different political formations and, concurrently, shaping the social relations within them. Borders between states, which were previously often scattered and permeable border areas, thus transformed into a network of territorial, clearly outlined delimitation lines that gravitated towards their respective political centres.²²

In these centralized states, state institutions began to replace the ruler's personalized authority. Lower nobility thus became subordinated to the state apparatus, while in some parts of Europe the identity of the population began to change as well. Nevertheless, quite some time had to pass for the new concept of territorial sovereignty to do away with the old concept of the oath of fidelity and to be used in practice. For instance, boundary stones that would mark the existence of the formal demarcation lines were still not placed on site. Consequently, many border areas remained permeable and fluid.²³ Modern concepts of territorial sovereignty, collective identity, state-building and borders further developed with the 1789 French Revolution. This saw the greater emergence of nationalism and the idea of the nation state, and in order to be successful states had to prompt individuals to identify very closely with the territory in which they lived. This so-called *territoriality of identity* gave rise to the nation, while state institutions provided the nation with the opportunity to express themselves politically. In this way borders became tools that connected everything and helped to maintain the national coherence and relations with other nations. With the formation of the nation state, the territory became more important to individuals. If prior to that the state had been represented by the nobility, at this stage the state included everybody living within its borders. Inhabitants were thus no longer serfs; they were now citizens of a territory administered by the state apparatus that was supposed to represent the population. Consequently, the authority over a territory did not belong exclusively to the ruler, but was instead in the hands of the nation or of the group of people inhabiting the delimited territory.²⁴

The principles of territorially delimited nation states were formed throughout the 19th century and matured with World War I, the watershed event that did away with old European empires. The radical reorganization of Europe and other parts of the world was then decided at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. This peace conference

20 Murphy, *Humanitarian Intervention*; Taylor in Flint, *Political Geography, WorldEconomy, NationState and Locality*.

21 Albert, *On Boundaries, Territory and Postmodernity*.

22 Giddens, *The NationState and Violence*; Paasi, *Boundaries as Social Processes*.

23 Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering*, 35.

24 Ibid., 36–37.

was marked by confusion and improvisation, due to the lack of a clear agenda and procedure. Territorial questions were dealt with more than the new, more just organization of the world. Following the collapse of four empires, there was much interest in territorial questions and even more with regard to their former territories. Formally, the pre-war and wartime secret agreements about the division of territories were not declared null and void. Consequently, the Paris Peace Conference was a mixture of trading, pressuring, blackmailing (e.g. the Italian thesis about a “mutilated victory” because they were afraid that the Treaty of London would not be realized),²⁵ lobbying and the random use of criteria for determining borders (geographical, geostrategic, transport-related, ethnic, with plebiscites in some places, arbitrary decisions in others, etc.) The participants’ ignorance was aggravated by their poor knowledge of geography, territorial disputes and those nations whose fates were being decided upon. In many cases the people involved could not even locate the territories that they dealt with on the ground. This was subsequently compensated for by various professional on-site commissions and influential individuals within the respective participating delegations.

The Paris Peace Conference began on 18 January 1919 in the Palace of Versailles. Thirty-two states took part, and agreements were written by fifty commissions that held more than 1,600 meetings. However, the defeated states were not allowed to participate, and the main decisions were made by three people: Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George, and Georges Clemenceau. The Italian Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, who was on very bad terms with Wilson due to Italy’s appetite for territory, had a lot to say as well. In essence, the Conference progressed in search of a compromise between the desires of various large countries, previously concluded secret agreements, the declared national principle and the aspirations for the neighbouring states of the Soviet Union to be as strong as possible to be able to withstand the spread of Bolshevism (the so-called *cordon sanitaire*). It was in this context that Clemenceau stated that “*it will be more difficult to win the peace than it was to win the war*”.²⁶ Principled questions were soon pushed to the background. The newly established states also sought to obtain as much of their neighbouring territory as possible, even though they referred to the ethnic principle. Border-related military conflicts went on for months in many places, and a few issues were addressed years later and remained a constant cause for conflicts between states.

Germany was declared to be the main culprit for the war, and it was decided that it would pay reparations for fifty years (the French demanded as many as 800 billion gold marks, but the amount was subsequently defined by reparation commissions), it lost colonies, its air force, the majority of its naval forces, Alsace, Lorraine, and a part of Poland. Under the agreement the German army was not to number more than 100,000

25 Lipušček, *Ave Wilson*, 124–125.

26 Macmillan, *Paris 1919. Six Months that Changed the World*, 31.

men. The Germans regarded this as a horrendous injustice and humiliation, as well as a “document of hatred”. However, Germany did not fight within its own territory during the war, its industry remained intact and the nation itself – barring the lost provinces – united, which allowed for its rapid rise in the interwar period. Had it not been for the French opposition, Germany would have included the Sudetes and Austria, and thus although defeated in the war it would have ended up being much stronger than it had been before the conflict. While Germany was affected by the debilitating consequences of defeat (among other things, the reparations collapsed the German currency in 1923), the altered payment plans and loan deferrals (which Germany was still paying as late as 1988) eventually resulted in the country paying only about 20 billion marks, and in 1932 the reparations were cancelled altogether.

The victors made decisions without seeking the losers’ consent; what is more, they even considered – when it was of benefit to some others, such as the Italians – that the Slovenes and similar nations, who were part of the belligerent empires, as losers. The victors’ appetite was great, not merely in Europe but also in the Middle East. The British colonies that participated in the war and whose casualty figures were significant – for example, Australia’s casualty rate exceeded that of the USA – also sought to expand their territories, which was made possible by means of the so-called mandates. Peace treaties were subject to different assessments in the interwar period, with some states being unable to come to terms with them to this day. Many other nations that obtained their own states with the Paris Peace Conference were disappointed by the peace treaties because the promise of the self-determination of nations was fulfilled only in part or not at all. Along with concluding peace, the Conference was also tasked with the regulation of relations and defining the borders between the newly established states in Eastern and Southern Europe. Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania gained independence, Poland was restored as an independent state, Austria, Hungary, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Czechoslovakia emerged in the territory of former Austria-Hungary, parts of whose territory were also obtained by Romania and Italy. The disintegration of Austria-Hungary was not planned, and this decision was only made in the final stages of the war, with the victors unprepared for the consequences. The situation with tsarist Russia’s western territories was similar because, as a victor, it expected to grow and not shrink in size.

The victors’ terms were formalized in the Treaty of Versailles with Germany,²⁷ which was followed by treaties with Austria (Saint-Germain, 10 September 1919); Bulgaria (Neuilly, 27 November 1919), and Hungary (Trianon, 4 June 1920). In Hungary,

27 *The Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany, the Protocol annexed thereto, the Agreement respecting the military occupation of the territories of the Rhine, and the Treaty between France and Great Britain respecting assistance to France in the event of unprovoked aggression by Germany. Signed at Versailles, June 28th, 1919.* See also: *Primary Documents – Treaty of Versailles: Articles 1–30 and Annex.*

the Treaty of Trianon caused a shock that the country has yet to overcome, with the nation losing two-thirds of its population and territory, including 3.4 million ethnic Hungarians now living outside of Hungarian borders. By comparison, Germany lost 13.5% of its territory and Bulgaria only 8%.²⁸ The Treaty of Sèvres, i.e. the treaty with the Ottoman Empire or Turkey, was concluded on 10 August 1920 in the suburbs of Paris.²⁹ This treaty marked the beginning of the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish nationalists opposed this treaty and began the war for Turkey's independence, united Turkish national territories and established the Republic of Turkey. Based on their success the Treaty of Sèvres was amended by the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923.³⁰

It was mostly the defeated states (Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey) that had to pledge themselves to grant rights to minorities. For some states, the acceptance of minority obligations was part of the terms of their admission to the League of Nations (Albania, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia).³¹

Millions of people of other nationalities ended up living in newly formed states, many of whom – including Slovenes – were divided among several states. Even though minorities were formally protected, mostly by international agreements, migrations took place throughout the post-war period. Initially, people fled from authorities whose nationality differed from their own, and, subsequently, from authoritarian and dictatorial regimes that emerged in the interwar period (particularly those operating under communism or fascism).³²

With the end of World War I, the principle of the self-determination of nations would become the foundation of the European political order and the highest expression of people's aspirations. The nationalization process of the borders would thus be concluded.³³ However, the Versailles Order³⁴ of the nation states had a flaw, because the boundary between two nations was not clearly demarcated with a line. Almost all of the newly established nation states consisted of more than one national group. In order to form homogeneity, which was required for the formation of unitary nations

28 Out of a total of 20,886,487 people (according to the 1910 population census) 7,615,117 people remained in Hungary, Romania obtained 5,257,467 people, Czechoslovakia 3,517,568 people, Yugoslavia 4,131,249 people (2,621,945 (the population of Hungary, author's note) + 1,509,295) and Austria 291,618 people. Additionally, Hungary had to pay an unspecified sum, its army was not allowed to have more than 35,000 soldiers, who could only be deployed to keep the peace in the country and monitor its borders. Adopted from: Mark Imre Major, *American Hungarian Relations 1918–1944*, Astor: Danubian Press, 1974.

29 *Treaty of Sèvres/Protocol*.

30 *Paris Peace Conference, 1919*.

31 *Albania – Declaration Concerning the Protection of Minorities in Albania*. Geneva, October 2, 1921.

32 More can be read on the subject in Stanislaw Sierpowski, *Minorities in the System of the League of Nations*.

33 Taylor and Flint, *Political Geography, WorldEconomy, NationState and Locality*.

34 The Versailles Order signifies a period of the European international order that was named after the most important treaty of the Paris Peace Conference, i.e. the Treaty of Versailles.

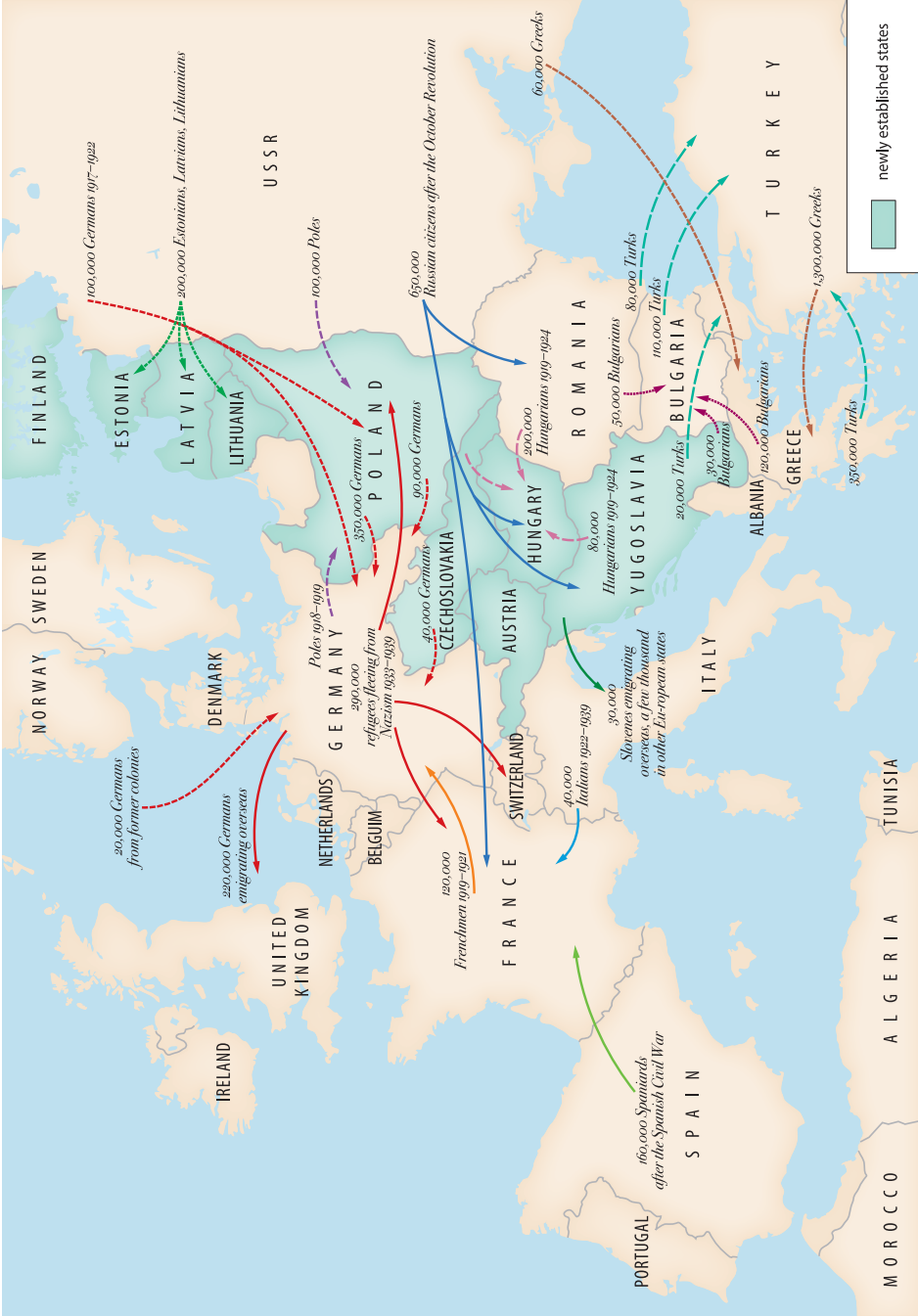


Fig. 7: Europe after World War I and Migrations

within specific state borders, different strategies were developed to implant the sense of a shared national identity among the heterogeneous populations.³⁵ National myths and symbols emerged that developed the sense of superiority of “us” and the inferiority of “them”, those living on the other side of the state borders,³⁶ as well as within the state borders if parts of the community had different values. This was a two-way process, because such exclusion promoted the shared national identity on the other side of the border as well. Through this process, the national borders became inviolable in the concept of the nation state, as well as a guarantee for its existence and an instrument of proving its legitimacy. Acts of territorial aggression, regardless of whether they are performed by the other state or if they originate in the country itself, were now regarded as acts of aggression aimed at a nation, not at a state *per se*.³⁷ As noted by Eric Hobsbawm, there is nothing like the possibility of an occupation to make people conscious of their collective existence.³⁸ Therefore the importance of national borders grew in the course of the 20th century, and not only in terms of individual states, Europe or specific continents, as today we cannot imagine the international community without borders: “*From the perspective of any particular state what it chiefly hopes to gain from participation in the society of states is recognition of its independence of outside authority, and in particular of its supreme jurisdiction over its subjects and territory.*”³⁹ And thus, through their role as delimitation points, borders establish and define the sovereign ownership of a territory and the jurisdiction over it. The bounded state territory is therefore supposed to be inviolable, regardless of the various events that could shatter its integrity, either by separation, irredentism, annexation or the violent interference of one or several foreign states in its internal affairs. The principles of territorial integrity and inviolability are the fundamental goals that a state aims to achieve.⁴⁰ However, as argued by the Slovene geographer Bufon: “*Actually, the development of political borders is the result of the aspiration for the territorialization and control of specific political systems on the one hand and the aspiration for expanding or changing these systems on the other.*”⁴¹ Some states thus advocate a form of territorial inviolability that is marked by borders when their own integrity is at stake; however, in their dealings with other, usually weaker states, they infringe on the integrity and inviolability of the latter.

In the course of history, territorial delimitation lines became the standard for forming the political space. They were meticulously outlined on maps and transferred on site

35 Anderson, *Zamišljene skupnosti*.

36 *Globalization or Global Apartheid?*; Paasi, *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness*; Paasi, *Region and Place*.

37 Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering*, 37.

38 Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 38.

39 Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 17.

40 Williams, *Territorial Borders, Toleration and the English School*, 739.

41 Bufon, *Ne vrag, le sosed bo mejak*, 11.

by means of boundary stones, border crossings, fences, watchtowers and other modes of demonstrating authority over a territory and protecting it. These lines became increasingly multifaceted in character because they played a key political, cultural, economic and social role. However, each degree of consolidation of the national borders increased the function of separation, which increased the differences on both sides of the border.⁴²

Due to the comprehension of borders as strict (national) divides – to which the European nations adhere to this day – the processes of national homogenization (and any wars these may cause) are yet to be concluded. However, borders have also preserved a certain degree of permeability in the most difficult conditions (occupation, and the post-war division of the world into blocs), and were crossed even when such movements were subject to strict control or illegal.

This did not change in the current situation that is marked by the migrant crisis (2015) and COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2021). The pandemic gave rise to a particular process of (im-)permeability that brought new dimensions and conceptions to the question of the borders. In Slovenia, which measures a good 20,000 km², the borders of 212 municipalities were uncrossable for the majority of the population, as per government orders. This is despite the fact that many municipal borders can be reached on foot in less than an hour, and many municipalities lack the basic healthcare or supply infrastructure.

Undoubtedly, the question of visible and invisible borders during the pandemic and the consequences of these on the global, European and local levels will be subject to many surveys in the future.

The subject of the research at hand, however, is Slovenes during what was probably the most difficult period in their modern history, namely during the fascist and Nazi occupation in World War II.

42 Knippenberg and Markusse, *Nationalising and Denationalising European Border Regions*; Taylor, *The State as Container*.

Slovenes and the Borders up to World War II

The prominent geographical position of what is the present Slovene territory – which has been part of many different state formations in the course of history and, before the arrival of the Slavs, was inhabited by many other civilizations from prehistory to the end of the Roman Empire – is both a blessing and a curse. The first Slavic formations (tribal unions), part of which were future Slovenes, settled in the area in the 7th and 8th centuries and were originally independent within broader state formations. Carantania, which is in Slovenes' mythical conception the first Slovene state, was at the turn of the 8th and 9th centuries part of Charlemagne's great Frankish Kingdom. Around 803 it was administratively incorporated into the Eastern March. To the south of it came into being the Friulian March, which was even larger and included modern-day central Slovenia (Carniola) and extended as far as the Pannonian Plain. Carantania's relative independence was confirmed by the ceremony for appointing its princes, which made use of the famed "Prince's Stone" and was not conducted anywhere else.

From their settlement onwards, the Slovenes' ancestors were divided among several state formations, and through the historical process they came under Frankish, Bavarian, German or partly Hungarian rule until, finally, the bulk of Slovenes ended up under the Habsburgs. Having been subject to the Aquileian administration, the western margin of the Slovene territory came under Venetian rule in the mid-15th century and, subsequently, under Italy. This process was associated with forced Christianization and feudalism. In this process and under the Habsburgs (in the broader framework of the Holy Roman Empire up to its disintegration in the early 19th century) the so-called historical lands came into existence in the Middle Ages that define the Slovenes' regional identity to this day. This identity is expressed, *inter alia*, by way of different dialects, habits and customs that are the result of different cultural influences. Despite the gradual formation of Slovenes as a single nation, the regional borders remain present in the Slovene consciousness. Historical lands came into existence due to the enduring aspirations of tribal families to increase and round out their estates, which allowed for the land's sovereignty. Carniola became the central Slovene land, in fact, the only one with a Slovene majority.

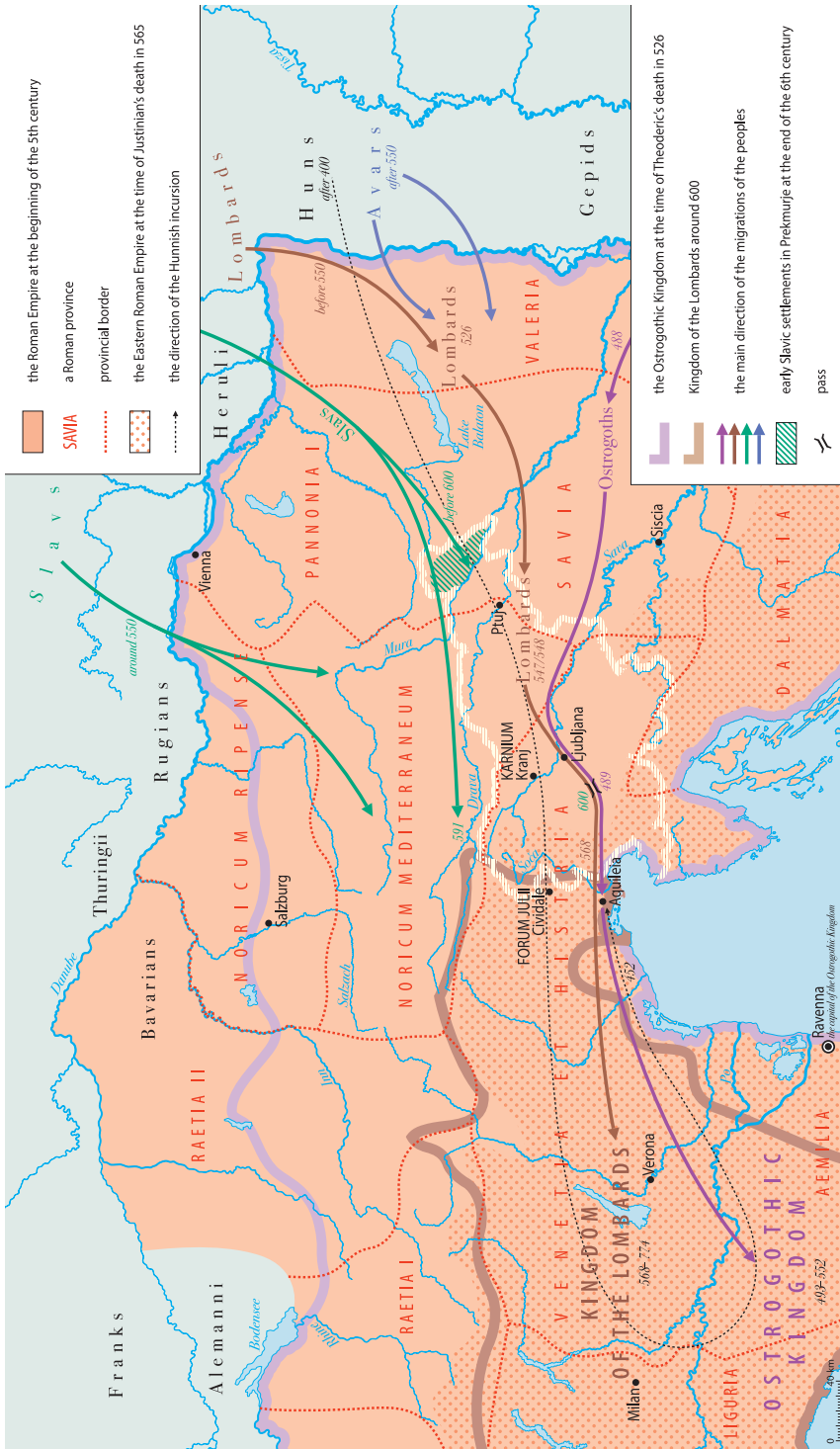


Fig. 8: Slovene ethnic territory with the neighbouring provinces in the 5th and 6th centuries.

After Napoleon's destruction of the Republic of Venice in 1797, when Austria obtained Venetian Istria and Venetian Slovenia, all Slovene-populated lands were united under one ruler for the first time. However, this did not last long. In the subsequent war, which ended with a treaty in 1805, Austria lost both lands to the Kingdom of Italy, Napoleon's state formation.



Fig. 10: Charlemagne's Frankish State between the years 768 and 814.

In 1809 Napoleon left his mark on Slovene lands for the third time, when he established the Illyrian Provinces, an administrative unit encompassing the entire Slovene Littoral, western Carinthia, and Carniola. The Illyrian Provinces were not integrated into the

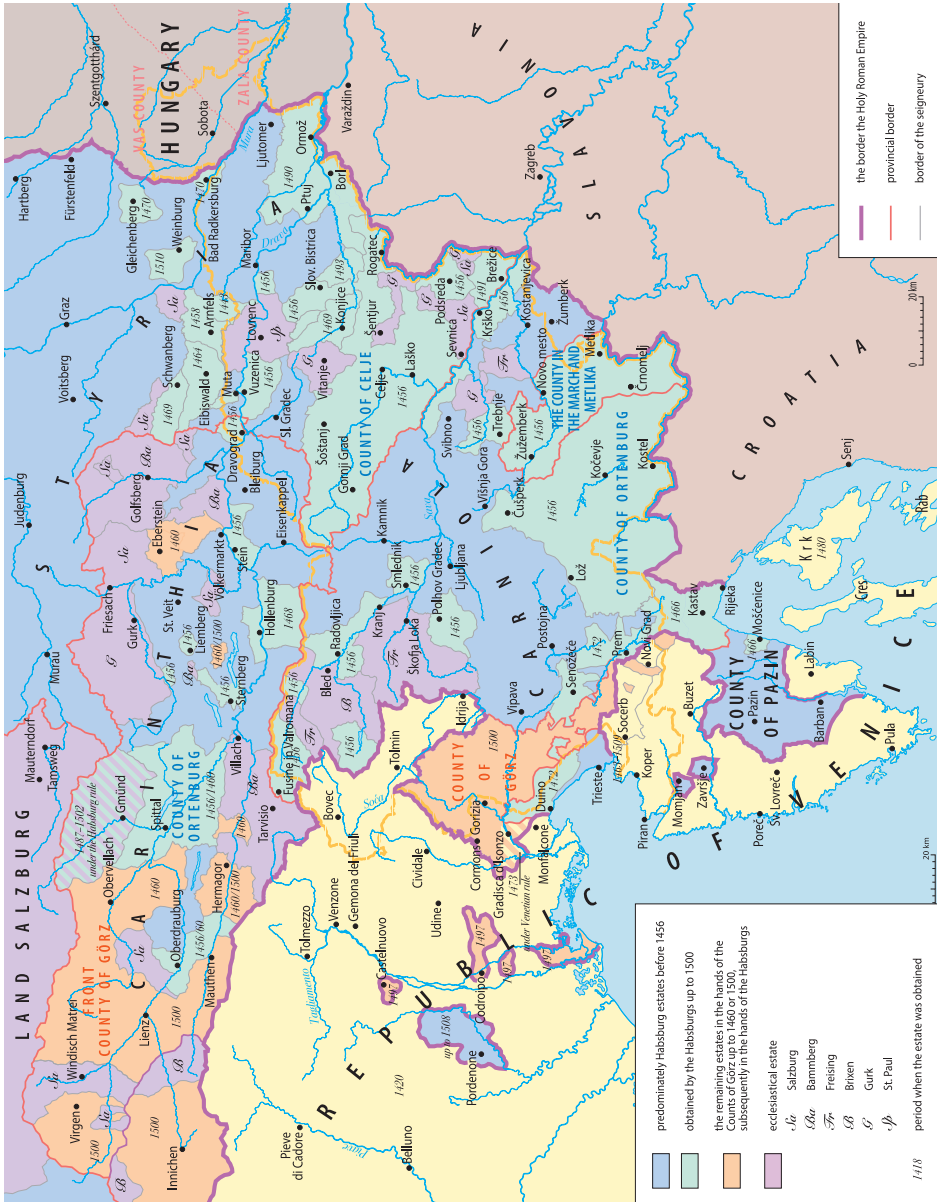


Fig. 11: The Habsburgs' dominance of the south-east of the Holy Roman Empire.



Fig. 12: The political and administrative situation during the French occupation in 1812.

French Empire, they were merely attached to it. Consequently, only a few French laws were in force here. The former Austrian administration was done away with in full and paid officials were entrusted with the new one. The judicature was completely separate from the executive authority, and the new legal order was grounded in the Napoleonic Code, which was based on the equality of all citizens before the law and introduced civil marriage. The French allowed the temporary use of the Slovene language, and established a university that was discontinued after the return of Austrian rule. A uniform “Illyrian” language, i.e. Serbo-Croatian, was envisaged that would coexist along the official French language.

Having lived within large empires, borders were something that was foreign to Slovenes up to the second half of the 19th century. However, the situation changed

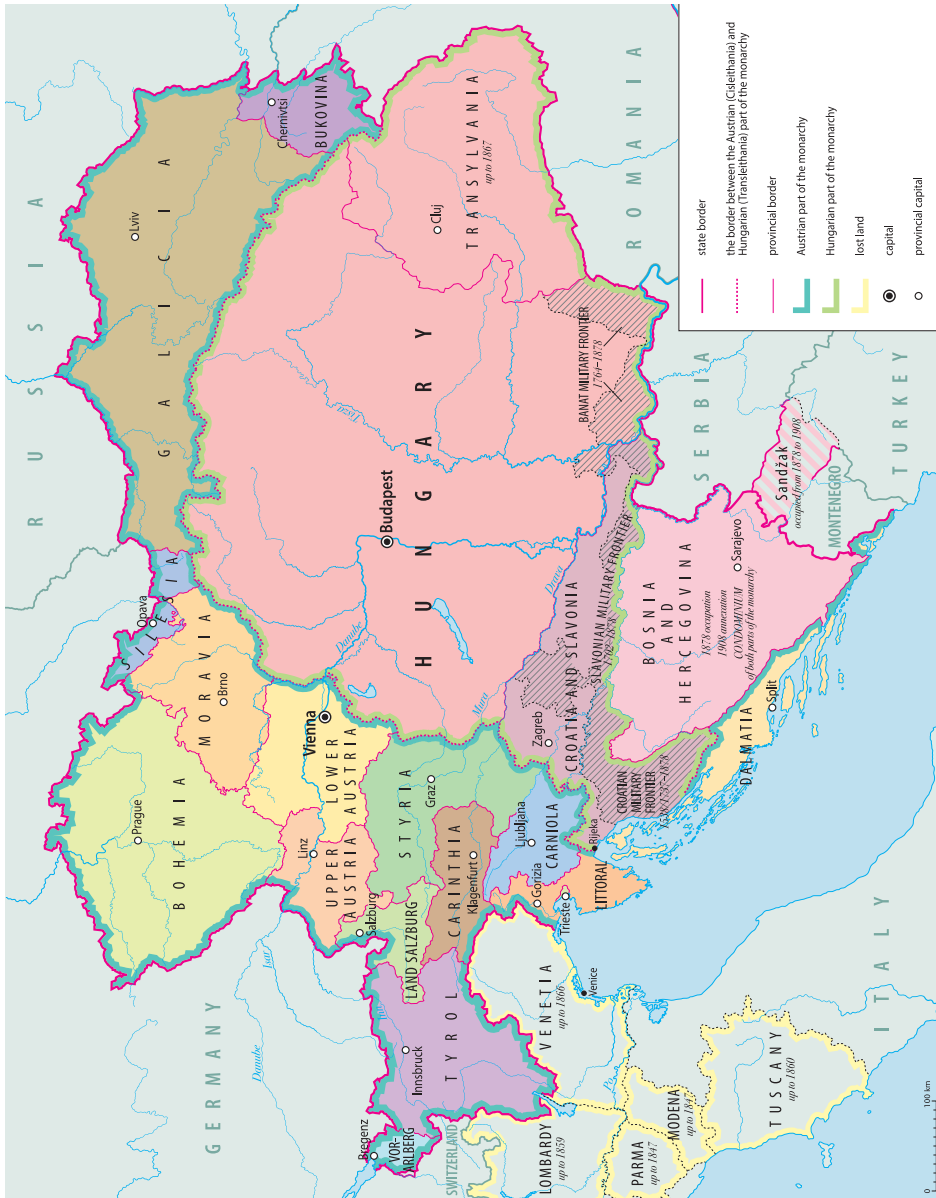


Fig. 13: The Habsburg Monarchy between the years 1848 and 1918.

significantly in more recent history, when borders and rapid changes to them became part and parcel of an average Slovene's life. In this context it is worth noting that a border is the organ of the state on its periphery,⁴³ and the state represents, so to speak, the framework of each citizen. The first Slovenes to be faced with this were the Venetian Slovenes. Following the Austro-Prussian/Italian war, which Austria lost, Benecia (Veneto) came temporarily under French rule and, subsequently, Italian. A consultative plebiscite was carried out, with 99.99% of the population opting to stay in Italy, including Slovenes (in Slovene-populated areas, i.e. Benecia and Resia, only two people voted against it).

From 1918 onwards, the Slovene ethnic territory saw the borders being changed significantly as many as five times: after World War I with the loss of the Littoral and parts of Carinthia, as well as with the annexation of Prekmurje; during World War II, with the introduction of occupation borders that made a deep cut into the centre of the Slovene-populated territory; after World War II, with the integration of the Littoral (partly with the Paris Peace Conference in 1947, partly with the second London Memorandum in 1954, which gave Slovenes a few dozen kilometres of coastline and access to the sea with the division of the Free Territory of Trieste between Yugoslavia and Italy); after Slovenia's independence and the regulation of the border with Croatia; after Slovenia joined the European Union and the Schengen Area with a reverse process, i.e. when the hard borders in the north and west of Slovenia disappeared, or at least seemed to. In these years a short-lived, deceiving hope was raised that the borders would no longer have a heavy impact on the lives of the Slovenes and others. However, we still live with the reality of borders on a day-to-day basis. They shape and frame our lives in the spatial order that adheres to the intertwined hierarchies of different types of boundaries, e.g. neighbourhoods, cities, towns, regions, states and, more recently, supranational formations, such as the European Union. Some of these are more noticeable in cultural and physical landscapes than others,⁴⁴ and all of them stem from the need to regulate, control and protect the human life. Concurrently, they reflect the belonging and distinction between "us" and "others". Borders are thus a human construct that is bounded by power and coercion, social organization, the division of labour and promotion of the collective identity within a bounded territory.⁴⁵

Borders and their demarcation are, first and foremost, an expression of power that gives a clear signal to society about who belongs where, who is a member of a specific community and who is not. Their traditional role is to regulate social relations, where outlining borders signifies the organization of human behaviour in an area in a manner that regulates movement within it. Additionally, state borders suggest the cohesion of

43 Cattaruzza, *Italy and Its Eastern Border*, 1.

44 Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering*, 1.

45 O'Dowd, *The Changing Significance of European Borders*, 14–15.

these spaces.⁴⁶ Slovenia is an example of this because its borders represent its territorial demarcation and suggest that people in this territory are alike. However, the actual situation is obviously more complex. People identifying as Slovenes live outside Slovene borders as well; additionally, individuals identifying as members of other nations, who might have different customs and values, also live in Slovenia. Slovenes within the state borders have different regional identities that are historically conditioned and very strong. This applies to the local vernacular (dialects) as well. The communication that occurs among all these people is possible, first and foremost, by means of the shared standard Slovene language.

The fundamental characteristic feature of the borders is their dual function, because they signify both lines of division and convergence. This holds particularly true when the boundary lies between two communities that are divided and brought in contact by it at the same time. This is because whenever a border is introduced, there will be individuals who attempt to cross it.

For Slovenia, just like many other nations, World War I was a watershed in terms of borders. At the end of World War I, the great powers declared their position on the Slovenes for the first time in history, even though the Entente powers had already made a deal with some Slovene territory to win over Italy (the so-called Pact of London in 1915). Up to that point, the Slovenes' relations with the Germans were very difficult and traumatic. The relentlessness and zealotry of Germans in Austria (and Germany) towards Slovenes during World War I and at the end of it did not leave much room for the possibility to solve the national question. It was only the result of the war that brought about the possibility to improve the Slovenes' position in the national sense. The same applied to Slovenes living under Hungarian rule. The end of the war saw the disintegration of Austria-Hungary that took place without the Slovenes' will or influence. Despite this defeat, the Austrian Germans sought to unite with Germany and include the Slovene territory in this new formation. According to the Pact of London, Italy would obtain one-third of the Slovene territory. After the armistice had been signed in November 1918, Italy also occupied the territory on the other side of this line on behalf of the Entente Powers, pushing into Slovenia's interior. The Yugoslav option was heavily contingent upon Serbia, as the Slovenes were part of a defeated state and Serbia was on the side of the winners.

The end of World War I signified the Slovenes' entry into the international arena, although this did not end well for them. The great countries which decided the fate of Slovenes either directly or indirectly were not particularly familiar with them before World War I. The French knew them best due to the remnants of their diplomatic memory from the period of the Illyrian Provinces, and Slovene intellectuals pinned

46 Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering*, 9.

their hopes on them. The French diplomatic sources indicate that the Slovenes were recognized as a separate nation in close circles, particularly in areas where the French had their people on location due to the delimitation-related questions (Prekmurje, Carinthia). Reports produced by the French embassy in Vienna, the consulate in Trieste and their representatives in the Plebiscite Commission, indicate that they were familiar with the situation at hand and knew something of the Slovenes.⁴⁷ *Inter alia*, they wrote that the Slovenian language and Slavic last names were preserved mostly with the help of the clergy, who played a decisive role in Carinthia and Slovenia, but also in Belgrade, where Dr Anton Korošec was their representative in the government.⁴⁸ However, the French reports considered Slovenes to be a nation of peasants, and Germans as a ruling nation that was culturally and economically more evolved. The Yugoslav political leadership and diplomacy regarded the French as their only true ally in international relations, particularly in terms of solving border-related problems. For instance, during Jovan Cvijić's visit to Carinthia before the plebiscite, when he told the French representatives that the French were their only supporters, Cvijić maintained that the Italians were hostile to them (the French agreed with his assessment), and the British were favourably disposed towards the Austrians.

The French were Serbian allies, and saw Yugoslavdom as being in line with the principle of the expansion of Serbia or of nation-building modelled after themselves. The French regarded the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as their child or as a child of "Versailles Europe". Much like the British, they were convinced that secret agreements must be respected, and relentlessly defended the position that the Treaty of London (1915) should be realized. Although not going beyond the agreed territory – something the Italians sought to achieve – it was eventually Great Britain and France that pressured the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes to sign the Treaty of Rapallo, which was detrimental to the Slovenes. To Great Britain, USA and Russia, Slovenia was neither a geographical nor a political term. The USA entered the international politics, which was then dominated by the old imperial powers, for the first time during World War I. The American position on solving world problems was very idealistic, and eventually caused more or less harm to the Slovenes. President Wilson, a historian and university professor, relied on the

47 CADN (Ministère des affaires étrangères et du développement international, Les archives diplomatiques, Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes), Représentations diplomatiques et consulaires: Consulat de France à Trieste (1769–1941); Représentations de la France dans les organisations et les commissions internationales: *Commissions de délimitation des frontières issues de la Première Guerre mondiale (1919–1936) – Commissions de délimitation des frontières en Europe, 1917–1927, 1935–1936; Frontières hungaroyougoslave, bulgaroyougoslave, albanoyougoslave, austroyougoslave, austroitalienne.*

48 CADN, Ambassade Vienne, t.e. 730, PO/1, 628, *Le Délégué de la République Française auprès de la commission de Plébiscite de Klagenfurt à M. Millerand, Président du Conseil Ministre des Affaires Etrangères. Klagenfurt/Celovec, le 20. Août 192. La situation dans la zone I(A) du Plébiscite.*

Inquiry, a young, inexperienced group that was formed *ad hoc* and numbered 126 members at the height of its operation. This group arrived at the Paris Peace Conference with preconceived positions that were difficult to change. It had almost no knowledge of Slovenes as a “non-historical” nation. Colonel Edward House, Wilson’s closest confidante, was particularly favourably disposed towards the Italians because he was fascinated by their culture. Having learned a few things about Slovenes, the Americans were convinced that they did nothing but complain and were unwilling to do anything of their own accord. During their first meeting, which was held on 18 November 1918, Colonel Edward House urged the leading Slovene politician Dr Anton Korošec to exert his influence on Nikola Pašić so that the latter would not send the Serbian army to the Slovene territory due to the impending Italian occupation, because this could lead to conflicts. Colonel House comforted Dr Korošec by saying that it is better to come to terms with the occupation of any city in the “disputed” area than to cause a conflict. If Slovenes acted in this way they would have the sympathies of the world and would not lose anything. Agreeing to such advice and naïvely trusting the US cost the Slovenes and Yugoslavs a great deal when solving the border question. This so-called *Wilsonianism* was most typical in the period before the Paris Peace Conference and in the first months of its course (up to June 1919). It was followed by a period of America’s distancing itself from European politics and a growing sense of isolationism up to December 1919 and, in this context, America’s final departure from the conference. However, a few key decisions were made in the first period. “*You are liberating us and cutting us in small pieces at the same time,*” was the line uttered during one of the two meetings with the Slovene delegation on 5 June 1919 in Paris that stuck most in Wilson’s memory. Subsequently, he spoke about the meeting with sympathy, in which the former Slovene Prime Minister Dr Janko Brejc, head of government that was formed upon the disintegration of Austria-Hungary, said the following: “*Ave Wilson, Sloveni morituri te salutant*”, i.e. Hail, Wilson, Slovenes who are about to die salute you. However, Wilson’s sympathies did not impact his decisions about the Slovene borders,⁴⁹ although his attitude was also significantly less colonial than that of the French or British. Wilson advocated for a new world order and for nations’ right to self-determination; however, his politics failed, and the US embraced isolationism. Pragmatism and isolationism, the main guidelines of American politics as far as Slovenes are concerned, led to conclusions that resembled those reached by the British. While large numbers of Slovene and other soldiers were dying on the Eastern Front, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov and the principal

49 Lipušček, Uroš, *Sacro Egoismo. Slovenci v krempljih tajnega londonskega pakta 1915*. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 2012; Rahten, Andrej, *Pozabljeni slovenski premier. Politična biografija dr. Janka Brejca (1869–1934)*. Klagenfurt, Ljubljana, Vienna: Mohorjeva družba, 2002; Rahten, Andrej, Dr. Ivan Schwegel in jadransko vprašanje na Pariski mirovni konferenci, *Acta Histriae*, 3 (2010), pp. 691–712.

architect of the Pact of London, Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, (with the active involvement and support of Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith) gave Slovene territory to Italy. Even though this was a complicated question of Russian-British relations, it was basically a simple one: in March 1915 British diplomats decided to acknowledge Russia's right to occupy Constantinople, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, whereby it obtained its concessions for northern Persia and the Suez Canal, and, simultaneously, both countries agreed that Italy's demands would be accommodated. The French joined the agreement for concessions in northern Africa.

Asquith's actions before and during the war were regarded as irresponsible and dangerous for the state by his contemporaries (his political decisions are thought to have been influenced by Venetia Stanley, who was his mistress at the time), government meetings were marked by confusion, no minutes were taken and, consequently, the decision-making cannot be traced.⁵⁰ Asquith was full of admiration for Italy, the last country that he visited as prime minister in late March 1916, during his final year at the helm of the government. Following this visit, he published a booklet entitled *Italy, our Ally. The book of Italy*, whose cover featured a picture of him and the Italian prime minister between the flags of both countries, inflated phrases and words of praise. His booklet begins with the following line: "*The admiration and affection which every Englishman feels for Italy have been quickened during the past six months in which our two nations have been comrades in arms.*" This is followed by a section of lavish praise expressed by both sides in different meetings and banquets that took place during his visit.⁵¹ Before World War I, British politicians learned about Slovenia – to the extent that they did – from works by the historian and writer Robert W. Seton-Watson and a few other experts on the South Slavs' national question in Austria-Hungary.⁵² However, they did not know nearly enough. Slovenes were not on the horizon of British politics at least until the end of the war, even though Britain made deals with Slovene territories. The first political study dates back to 1919. The historical section of the Foreign Office produced a 20-page study entitled *The Slovenes*. This is a relatively well-written historical overview, also taking into account the inhabitants of Prekmurje, who – though mistakenly referred to as inhabitants of Međimurje – are regarded as Slovenes, thus pointing out that the area is populated by Slovenes of the Protestant faith. However the following is of key importance: it is maintained in

50 Webb, Mike, *From Downing Street to the Trenches. Firsthand Accounts from the Great War, 1914–1916*. Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2014.

51 Asquith, Herbert H., *Italy Our Ally: being an account of the visit to Italy*. London: T. F. Unwin Ltd., 1916.

52 Seton-Watson, Robert William, *The Southern Slav Question and the Habsburg Monarchy*. London: Constable & Co., 1911. See also: Seton-Watson, Robert William, *The Balkans, Italy and the Adriatic*. London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1915; and Seton-Watson, Robert William, Seton-Watson, Hugh, Boban, Ljubo, Gross, Mirjana, Krizman, Bogdan, Šepić, Dragovan (eds.), *R. W. Seton-Watson and Yugoslavs: Correspondence 1906–1941 in 1918–1941*. London: British Academy, 1976.

the study that Slovenes never established their own state, and do not have their own national tradition or historical rights to which the British could refer in the formation of their policy.⁵³

Consequently, it cannot be said that British politicians were not familiar enough with the Slovene nation before the end of the war. However, much like other great powers, they estimated that Slovenes lacked internal strength to obtain an autonomous position, let alone their own state. Therefore they did not concern themselves with Slovenes a great deal. That being so, they saw no obstacles for the realization of the Pact of London even after the formation of the Yugoslav state. It was not until their uprising during World War II that Slovenes had an opportunity to assert their statehood and rectify the borders.

Slovenes' fate after World War I was thus decided in the framework of (secret) international agreements, bargains made at the Paris Peace Conference, doubts about Slovene national vitality, and prejudice. As a result, Slovenes were divided among four states, only one of which allowed for their national consolidation, i.e. the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes or the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Unfavourable foreign-policy conditions, the Slovene politicians' helplessness and lack of skills, along with the absence of interest of the new Serbian or Yugoslav authorities, resulted in Italy's acquisition of the western part of Slovene territory, i.e. the Littoral, while its northern part, i.e. Carinthia, was lost in the plebiscite. Slovenes were thus faced with a new reality – they lived in four states with different political systems, all of which were based on authoritarian underpinnings and unfavourably disposed towards Slovenes in the national context. More than a third of Slovenes remained outside the parent territory; Slovenia lost Trieste, a city with some 57,000 Slovenes, and thus its most significant industrial centre and access to the sea. Slovenes in the Littoral were subject to a planned Italianization in the interwar period, fascist violence and economic oppression, and consequently around 100,000 people were forced to emigrate, mostly to Yugoslavia (around 70,000), South America or elsewhere. Nevertheless, Slovenes in the Littoral managed to retain – publicly or illegally – their cultural organizations and preserve their linguistic and cultural identity. Apart from that, they were the first in Europe to put up physical resistance to fascism. Slovenes in Austria were formally protected by minority-related provisions of the Treaty of Saint-Germain, although Austria did not fully comply with these. The period following the *Anschluss* (Slovenes voted for it to avoid being accused of disloyalty, and the consequences stemming from such assessments), saw a gradual increase in Nazi pressure. Its ultimate goal was to achieve a complete removal and Germanization of Slovenes in Carinthia, which was initiated by Nazis during World War II. However, they failed to achieve this.

53 IWM (Imperial War Museum, London), *The Slovenes. Handbook prepared under the direction of the historical section of the Foreign Office NO 14 a (Confidential)*, January 1919.

Nationally speaking, the integration of Prekmurje after World War I, the eastern-most part of the Slovene territory, was a notable achievement, done despite the lack of general awareness that the population of Prekmurje was part of the Slovene nation, and in the face of the fact that life with the different communities living side-by-side in the interwar period (and later) was marked by prejudice and stereotypes. In accordance with the Treaty of Trianon, the Slovene-populated Rába region became part of Hungary and, in line with the Vend theory, Slovenes living there were subject to an attempted Hungarianization. It was mostly with the help of the Church that the Slovene language was preserved in this poverty-stricken and backward region.



Fig. 14: The Rapallo Border.

On 12 November 1920 the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Italy signed an agreement in the Italian town of Rapallo, by means of which the border, i.e. the so-called Rapallo border, was defined between these two states. It measured 289 km in length and cut deeply into Slovene ethnic territory. This short-lived border divided a territory that was before 1918 part of a single state (Austria-Hungary), breaking in pieces the Slovene territory that had been ethnically homogeneous for centuries. Inevitably, this new border resulted in many traumas and broke off traditional migration patterns, as well as those of migration, agriculture, commerce or other contacts

and needs. New administrative centres thus emerged, as well as a new official language of communication on the Italian side of the border. Areas located far away from the sea that were in the period of Austria-Hungary part of historical lands situated in modern-day Slovenia's interior, thus became part of the geographical definition "Primorska" (Slovene for the Littoral) in the Slovenes' perception.⁵⁴ After World War II, the bulk of this territory became part of Slovenia due to the successful national liberation war; however, its geographical and cultural affiliation with "Primorska" remained. A two-decade long life in Italy and under fascism left its mark on the architecture, habits, diet and mindset of the locals, who are particularly sensitive to fascism to this day. Following the introduction of the Rapallo border, an extensive defence infrastructure was built on both sides of it: the so-called Rupnik Line on the Yugoslav side – named after General Leon Rupnik, who was in charge of its construction and became the most famous collaborationist during World War II and was sentenced to death after it – and the so-called Alpine Wall on the Italian side. This defence infrastructure (which was not used during World War II and was never finished on the Yugoslav side) left a permanent mark on the landscape and the people living there.⁵⁵ Life in formerly closed-in and remote areas improved due to the new infrastructure, but also on account of smuggling; additionally, the arrival of foreigners (from other parts of Slovenia and Yugoslavia on the Yugoslav side of the border, and from other parts of Italy on the Italian side) had a significant impact on the population's lives, including their romantic relationships, marriages, and births. A part of the Rapallo border was turned into the German-Italian border during World War II and another part transformed into Italy's internal border, which was preserved by Italy even though the area at hand, i.e. the Province of Ljubljana, was occupied by Italy and was part of the Kingdom of Italy.

Carinthia was another part of the territory that was lost after World War I. Unlike the territory in the west, this area saw severe conflicts take place between Slovene and Austrian forces from the end of the war to the late spring of 1919. Following the disintegration of Austria-Hungary, its South Slavic population established a month-long interim state, i.e. the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, with Zagreb as its capital, which was united with Serbia on 1 December 1918. However, the Serbian army did not arrive in Slovenia immediately, and thus Slovene volunteers led by General Rudolf Maister fought for Carinthia and Styria, which Austrian Germans sought to obtain as well. A delimitation line was defined and armistice agreed between the Slovene and Austrian sides in early 1919, which was occasionally violated by both. In April 1919, before any decisions were reached at the Paris Peace Conference, Slovene troops initiated a great but poorly executed offensive.

54 *Italijanskoslovenska meja od Rapalla, prek Osima do danes (1920–2020).*

55 Peter Oblak, *Podzemni bunker Goli vrh.*

Suffering great losses, they had to retreat quickly to their starting positions. The Austrians crossed the river Drava, reached the Karawanks and penetrated the valley of the river Meža (as far as Slovenj Gradec). However, by that time the Serbian army had arrived in Slovenia. The high command of the Yugoslav Drava Division mobilized Slovene conscripts who were born in a few specific years, brought in additional troops from Serbia and mounted a counteroffensive in June. Consisting mostly of Slovene troops, the Yugoslav army occupied the entire Slovene-populated Carinthia. The Austrians abandoned the armistice, the Great Powers responded at the Paris Peace Conference. They were extremely unhappy that the Yugoslav side engaged in military operations in the period when the border was to be defined at the Conference.

On behalf of the Entente, the Italian troops introduced a four-kilometre delimitation strip between both armies (and thus the Yugoslav army was forced to a partial retreat).

In mid-February 1919 the Yugoslav delegation presented its demand as to the border in Carinthia. The border would run along the line Rosskofl near Pontebba, Hermagor – the mountains between the Drautal and Gailtal–Gummern–Ossiacher See, Ossiacher Tauern–Ulrichsberg–Magdalensberg–Saualpe–Dreieckkogel. On the basis of the assessment made by the US delegation, America insisted on the border in the Karawanks, the British gave Bleiburg, Bad Eisenkappel and Klagenfurt to Austria, while the Italians demanded the entire Carniolan–Carinthian border. Other variants were put forward as well; finally, the proposal about a plebiscite in the Carinthian Basin prevailed on 27 August. It was divided into two zones, Zone A and B. The first part of the two-stage referendum would be held in the Yugoslav zone (Zone A), if the population opted for Yugoslavia, the second part would be held in Zone B, otherwise the latter would become part of Austria without the plebiscite.

The Slovene–Yugoslav authorities in Zone A were faced with a series of problems and considerable opposition. The population regarded the demarcation line as a curtailment of freedom, Germans had problems with Slovene being the language of communication in the administration, as did many Carinthian Slovenes, who were used to communicating in German in official matters and spoke Slovene (dialect) at home, in Sunday school and in the Church. The removal of the German administration set off strong reactions among the German population, as did the control of large estates and industrial plants that affected mostly Germans due to the social structure. This went on for a year, then three months before the plebiscite the Plebiscite Commission began to control the administration and the demarcation zone had to be opened. This enabled large-scale dissemination of German propaganda, which made use of the undemocratic situation in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, as well as extortion, bribery and various forms of pressure. The plebiscite was held on 10 October 1920. The vote was cast by 95.75% of those entitled to vote. Voters had to be at least 20 years old, their place of birth had to be located in the plebiscitary zone or they had to have permanent



Fig. 15: The border in the west after World War I: the proposed courses.

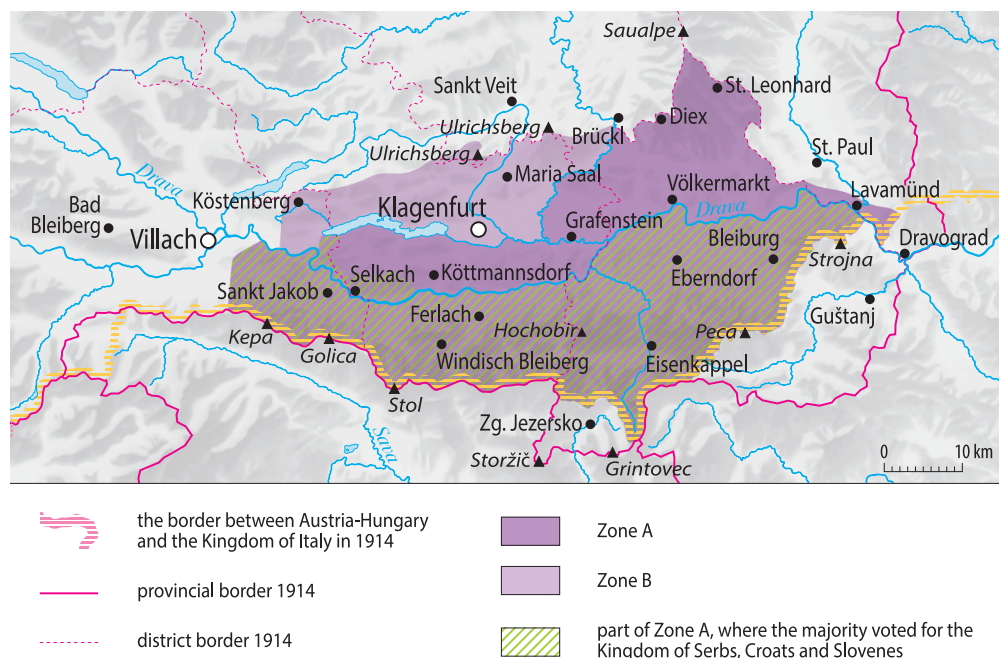


Fig. 16: The 1920 plebiscite in Carinthia.

residence there before 1 January 1912. Because both zones were considered to be a single plebiscitary territory, those born in Zone B who resided in Zone A during the plebiscite were entitled to vote, as were those whose official place of residence was in Zone A but lived elsewhere (which was the case with a relatively large number of German officials). The voting was secret, and counting went on for three days. The head of the Plebiscitary Commission announced the results on 13 October. A total of 22,025 people, or 59.04% of voters, voted for Austria and 15,279 (40.96%) for integration into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. More than 50,000 Slovenes, upwards of 69% of the population, lived in the territory of Zone A before the war, with Germans accounting for less than 31%, which implies that at least 10,000 Slovenes voted for Austria. Historians who have dealt with the plebiscite believe that more than 59% of Slovenes voted for Yugoslavia and fewer than 41% for Austria. Despite a few irregularities, the plebiscite demonstrated the will of the people, and along with the actions taken by the Yugoslav authorities, an important role in the decision to vote for a green (Austrian) ballot was played by propaganda and the Social Democrats. Slovenes who voted for Austria were soon disappointed: the German denationalization activities continued despite the pre-plebiscitary promises. The Yugoslav propaganda focused mostly

on national consciousness, disregarding the political, social and economic reasons for voting, which were of key importance. The Carinthian provincial authorities were more aware of the importance of propaganda and invested a lot of money into it. The Austrian propaganda highlighted the traditional attachment to Austria, the threat of Italy's impending war with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the compulsory military service to the Serbian Orthodox king, and unrest on the borders of the new Balkan state, contrasting this with the democratic nature of the Austrian republic and various economic advantages (better prices for agricultural produce, etc.). Anti-Serbian propaganda, which had been strong even before the war, had a powerful effect here, as did the anti-war atmosphere. The social unrest in the Kingdom and the authorities' response to it also had a strong psychological effect, as did the decreased Slovene autonomy after the unification. Slovenes were deeply affected by the loss of Slovene-populated Carinthia, because they regarded it as the cradle of Sloveneness (much like Serbs do Kosovo), particularly due to the mythic conception that Carantania, which was headquartered in Carinthia and where Carantanian princes were installed, was the first Slovene state.

Styria became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes despite various diplomatic pressures. The Italians, in particular, opposed the newly established state and sought to obtain large parts of its territory. They also demanded that Maribor be part of Austria, and a border be set along the line the river Mura–Ljutomer–Pragersko–Pohorje (Velika Kopa)–Plešivec–Bad Eisenkappel–Ljubelj. Additionally, they demanded the areas of Jesenice, Bled and Bohinj. Meanwhile, the French supported Yugoslav demands. Following long debates, Bad Radkersburg was given to Austria, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes obtained Maribor and Styria. The Italians demands regarding Jesenice, Bled and Bohinj were rejected.

Being part of the Hungarian half of the monarchy, Prekmurje, the easternmost part of the Slovene territory, was initially not paid much attention at the Paris Peace Conference, even though the Yugoslav delegation had a proposal for its delimitation. This proposal was accepted at the Conference mostly due to the spread of revolution in Hungary. This revolution also reached Prekmurje, a region that was nationally mixed but had Slovenes as the majority population. The Entente sent to the area the army of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which occupied Prekmurje in 1919. Subsequently, Prekmurje became part of Yugoslavia. The northernmost part of the Slovene-populated territory that gravitated towards Szentgotthárd (Slovene Monošter, German St. Gotthard), which along with Prekmurje constituted a uniform province that Slovenes in Prekmurje referred to as the Slovene March (Slovene: Slovenska krajina or Slovenska okroglina), became part of Hungary.⁵⁶

56 More can be read on the subject in *Mi vsi živeti ščemo: Prekmurje 1919: okoliščine, dogajanje, posledice*.

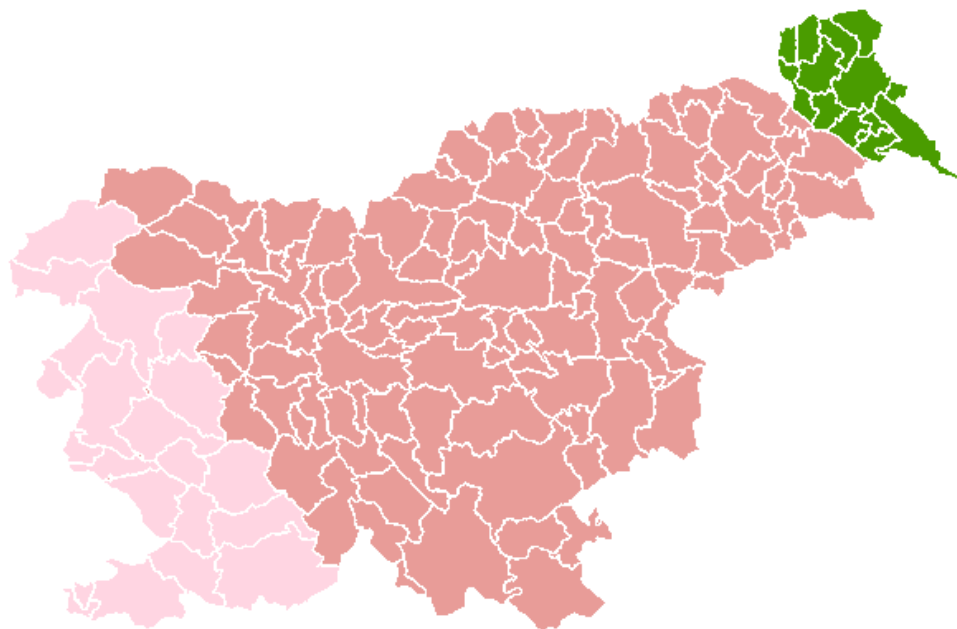


Fig. 17: The territory of the present-day Republic of Slovenia in 1920: light pink shows the territory obtained by Italy after World War I; pink shows the territory that was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) and green shows the territory that had been part of Hungary for centuries, but in the framework of Austria-Hungary (Prekmurje), and which was obtained by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1919.

European Borders on the Eve of World War II

Regardless of an abundance of literature on World War II on the one hand, and on borders and border-related questions on the other, there is a shortage of contemporaneous discussions of these topics in specialist publications. Why this is the case is not the main question, here, it is simply significant that despite the considerable research and literary corpus dealing with World War II there have not been enough scientific discussions about the borders of the period. Naturally, this does not imply that borders were not impacted or shaped by the war or, in turn, that the borders did not have an impact on the conflict itself. On the contrary, borders, particularly those defined at the Paris Peace Conference, played a key role in the formation of reasons for its outbreak to the extent that, in Europe, World War II could be referred to as a war for the borders. However, only the most important changes of borders during World War II will be addressed in each related chapter, as there were hundreds of small modifications, as attested by the fact that only three European states retained their pre-war borders at the end of the conflict: Denmark, the Netherlands, and Norway.

Seeking to punish the vanquished states and following the policy of self-determination, the Paris Peace Conference changed Europe completely. New nation states also emerged from the ashes of World War I, namely Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Austria, and Hungary.⁵⁷ The victorious states obtained parts of the German territory or new nation states profited from the losses. Some of these losses were particularly painful, e.g. Alsace–Lorraine, as well as the Polish corridor past Gdansk as far as the North Sea, whereby East Prussia was cut off from the central German territory.

The newly formed nation states were mostly happy with the outcome of the Peace Conference, which was not the case with the vanquished states. They believed that they were entitled to self-determination as well, and to the realization of the concept that

⁵⁷ Having lost extensive territories, the dual Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was divided into two independent states. Initially, Austria hoped to be united with Germany, which was prevented both by the Treaty of Versailles and the Treaty of Saint-Germain.

all members of a single nation should live within the borders of their home country. Having been denied the right to self-determination resulted in a state of affairs that led to the formation of the extreme nationalist politics in countries that had been defeated in the war. They ignored the fact that by displaying such tendencies they denied this right to other nations and caused them harm. The League of Nations, which was established at the Paris Peace Conference, sought to ensure the “territorial status quo” as the main principle of the international legitimacy.⁵⁸ Consequently, the League of Nations was, in principle, an international organization that advocated for the protection and preservation of the borders of Versailles Europe. According to the League’s principles, the violation of borders transgressed the principle of national self-determination, even though this principle was compromised in its very foundation when it was denied to the defeated states. The League’s position was confirmed by the 1928 Kellogg–Briand Pact, in which signatory states promised to respect international borders and to refrain from conflicts aimed at the revision thereof.⁵⁹ The Versailles agreement was confirmed once again by the international community when in 1931 the League of Nations supported the Stimson Doctrine that refused to admit the legality of territorial revisionism.⁶⁰ By way of all these provisions the states that had won World War I sought to freeze the European political map, as well as that of the rest of the world. However, the policies of irredentism, revisionism, and nationalism were too powerful.⁶¹

Territorial revisionism was driven by irredentism, a political movement for the integration of a territory inhabited by a certain ethnic minority into its “home” country.⁶²

58 The establishment of the League of Nations was mentioned in the preamble of the Treaty of Versailles and began its operation on 10 January 1920. Originally, the League consisted of 32 Entente Powers and 13 neutral states. The League of Nations was established on the initiative of the US President Woodrow Wilson. However, the USA as not a member of this organization because it began to follow an isolationist policy. Another 21 states joined the League of Nations between 1920 and 1937, including Germany in 1926 (before leaving this organization in October 1933) and the Soviet Union in 1934 (which was expelled in 1940). The League of Nations was dissolved in 1946 after the establishment of the United Nations. The League’s most important legacy is the formation of the foundations of the global financial policy and healthcare guidelines; however, lacking the power for sanctioning, this organization could not ensure the principle of collective security.

59 The Kellogg–Briand Pact, which prohibited all wars except defensive ones, was concluded in Paris on 27 August 1928. It was named after its architects, the US Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Aristide Briand. The signatories included France, the USA, Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Italy, Japan, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Another 63 states joined at a later stage, including the Soviet Union and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

60 The Stimson Doctrine was named after the US Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson. The reason behind this doctrine was Japan’s violation of international laws, when the Japanese army blew up a section of the railway line in South Manchuria on 18 September 1931 as a pretext for invading Central Manchuria. In January 1932 Stimson announced that the USA would not recognize any territorial or administrative changes in China. The League of Nations confirmed the Stimson Doctrine unanimously in March 1932.

61 Jackson and Zacher, *The Territorial Covenant*, 3. citeseerx.ist.psu.edu: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.615.1864&rep=rep1&type=pdf> (accessed: February 2020).

62 Irredentism is a bilateral and concurrent aspiration of the home country and its compatriots in another state for the introduction of ethnoterritorial state borders. More can be read on the subject in Füzesi, *Explaining irredentism*, 277.

Among the vanquished states irredentism was most prominently developed in Hungary, Germany, and Bulgaria. With the Communist Party's consolidation of authority, the Soviet Union sought to revise territorial concessions that were agreed upon in Brest-Litovsk⁶³ in 1918, on the basis of which the Baltic states became independent,⁶⁴ and which provided the foundations for the formation of the Second Polish Republic. Russia attempted to rectify the border with Poland by force during the Soviet-Polish war, which resulted in its defeat and outlined the borders of the Second Polish Republic far in the east.⁶⁵ Almost two decades later, the revision of this border was one of the reasons behind the Soviet Union's accession to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact and its participation in the partition of Poland in 1939.⁶⁶ The Treaty of Trianon, which was based on the strategic principle in favour of the new nation states, deprived Hungary of about 72% of its pre-war territory.⁶⁷ This implied that as many as three million Hungarians were all of a sudden cut off from their home country and reduced to the role of an ethnic minority. The bulk of them ended up in Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Romania. On the other hand, the establishment of new Hungary decreased the percentage of the population whose mother tongue was not Hungarian. In 1880 this group totalled 53.4%, in 1910 46.5% and at this point a mere 10%. This percentage was not negligible;⁶⁸ however, new Hungary thus became ethnically much more homogeneous than it had been in the past. Nevertheless, 4 June, the anniversary of the Treaty of Trianon, became a day of mourning for the Hungarian nation in the interwar period. Shops and educational institutions remained closed and Hungarian flags flew at half-mast on that date. Greater Hungary still existed in the Hungarians' imaginary,

63 The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk between the Central Powers and Soviet Russia was signed on 3 March 1918. Russia gave up Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Ukraine and the territory of modern-day Armenia. Following Germany's capitulation in November 1918, the Entente and Soviet Russia declared this treaty null and void.

64 O'Connor, *The History of the Baltic States*.

65 Soviet Russia and Poland engaged in a conflict for the territory of modern-day western Ukraine and parts of modern-day Belarus between February 1919 and October 1920. Initially, the Polish troops managed to reach Kyiv; however, the Red Army pushed them westwards, managed to cross the Vistula and even pose a threat to Warsaw. Soviet Russia then lost the battle for Warsaw. The Peace of Riga was signed in 1921, on the basis of which the borders of the second Polish state were shifted far away to the east. The Soviet Union succeeded in revising the border only as a member of the victorious WWII coalition, namely at the expense of defeated Germany. More can be read on the subject in Davies, *White Eagle, Red Star*.

66 Officially, this is a German-Soviet non-aggression pact, which was signed in Moscow on 23 August 1939 by Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov, foreign ministers of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The signatories pledged a 10-year alliance in the event that either side would be attacked. In the secret part of this agreement both states divided among themselves Poland along the river basin of Narew-Vistula-San and agreed to integrate Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Bessarabia into the Soviet Union and Lithuania into the German area of influence.

67 The Treaty of Trianon is the fourth out of five peace treaties that were concluded in the scope of the Paris Peace Conference. It was signed by the Entente and Hungary as a successor state of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy on 4 June 1920.

68 Hoensch, *Geschichte Ungarns*, 103.

and the Treaty of Trianon was tantamount to a death sentence. Determined to stand up to this treaty, many Hungarians gathered at public events, demanding reunification with the lost territories, refusing to accept the loss by shouting "No, no, never!"⁶⁹ Maps showing Hungary's new borders were in cartography referred to as *mutilated Hungary*.⁷⁰ All this was indicative of a considerable feeling of injustice. As regards the Hungarian relations with Slovenia, they rejected the Slovene proposals for autonomy that were put forward in widely attended gatherings. Following the Treaty of Trianon and the Yugoslav army's occupation, the Hungarians handed over Prekmurje to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Beltinci on 17 August 1919, managing to keep the Rába region. This loss was later revised with the Hungarian occupation in 1941, although after World War II Prekmurje became part of Slovenia again.

Both Hungary and Germany regarded territorial losses and the denial of the right to unification with Austria as great injustice committed by the victorious states. However, unlike Hungary, Germany's revisionist policy had a greater impact on Europe's stability. Germany pursued a nationalist foreign policy as early as in the period of the Weimar Republic,⁷¹ by means of which it sought to impugn or revise the provisions of the dictated peace of Versailles, including the loss of territories. Having signed the Pact of Locarno in 1925,⁷² Germany recognised the borders in the west and won enough favour of the Western Great Powers to be able to turn down the so-called Eastern Locarno. Consequently, Germany pursued a more aggressive policy in Eastern Europe, demanding concessions for the German ethnic minority and, at the same time, never renouncing the revision of the existing borders.⁷³ The policy of appeasement adopted by Western states grew in the years when the Nazi Party rose to power. Then, in the late 1930s, Hitler demanded that the most painful losses be addressed. In 1938 he carried out the long-desired annexation of Austria and, with the Munich Agreement that was signed half a year later, he secured the German-populated Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. At the outbreak of World War II, on 1 September 1939, the policy of irredentism merged with that of expansionism. Initially, Nazi Germany annexed territories populated by a considerable German minority. Subsequently, with the use of more violent methods, it

69 *Nem, nem, soha!*

70 Csonka Magyarország. More can be read on the subject in Mithander and Troy, *Collective Traumas*, 86.

71 The term Weimar Republic signifies the German state between the establishment of the German Republic in 1918 and Hitler's rise to power in 1933. Its name is derived from the city of Weimar, where the national assembly was held after having left Berlin due to the revolution. The Weimar Constitution was adopted in Weimar on 31 July 1919.

72 The Pact of Locarno is a series of agreements concluded on 16 October 1925 in Locarno, Switzerland. In the central part of the treaties, Germany, France, and Belgium agreed about the course of the state borders and to not engage in the violent revision thereof. The Pact of Locarno was signed by Great Britain in Italy as well. It was annulled on 7 March 1936, when Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, marched into the demilitarized Rhineland and violated the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles.

73 Fink, *German Revisionpolitik*, 144.

began to conquer other territories which were regarded as parts of its *Lebensraum*, and would allow for the survival and flourishing of the thousand-year-old German Reich.⁷⁴

The victors of World War I were also not immune to the temptations of irredentism that marked, first and foremost, the interwar politics of the fascist Kingdom of Italy. At the Paris Peace Conference Italy strove for a complete realization of the 1915 Treaty of London,⁷⁵ in which it was promised considerable territorial concessions by the Entente, most of all at the expense of about half a million Slovenes and Croats. Still, Italy obtained less than it wanted or been promised. In the territory of Slovenia, for instance, Italy wanted to secure Ljubljana, as well as the mining region of Zasavje, which was also an unachievable goal during the WWII occupation.⁷⁶ Following a proposal put forward at the Paris Peace Conference that the city of Rijeka become part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Gabriele D'Annunzio and his 2,000 legionaries marched into the city on 12 September 1919, occupying Rijeka and forcing the American, British and French troops to leave the city. In the strained atmosphere of this occupation that lasted for almost a year, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Italy signed the Treaty of Rapallo, with Italy obtaining Trieste, the region of Gorizia, Istria, and a part of Carniola. D'Annunzio was removed from Rijeka and this city became an independent state until the annexation by fascist Italy, as led by Benito Mussolini and on the basis of the Treaty of Rome.⁷⁷ Even though Italians did not constitute the majority of the population in these areas, the annexed territories were subject to forced assimilation, with Italy's constant attempts to expand both its rights and territories. By rewarding Italy, the victors of World War II denied the local Slovene and Croatian population's right to self-determination.⁷⁸ On account of the concessions granted to Italy, the map of Versailles Europe was labelled as an unrealized affair, a relic of the pre-war situation, in which empires handed out territories that did not belong to them.

On the eve of World War II, the states pursuing the policy of irredentism became allies in their struggle for abolishing the system established by the Paris Peace Conference and for the introduction of a New Order in Europe under the primacy of Nazi Germany. This was realized primarily through the expansionism of Nazi Germany,

74 Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*, 81.

75 The Pact of London, a secret agreement between the Entente and the Kingdom of Italy, was concluded on 26 April 1915. By signing this agreement, Italy agreed to enter World War I on the side of the Entente. In return, the latter promised to grant Italy the territories of South Tyrol, Trieste, Istria, and Dalmatia.

76 In Dalmatia, for instance, Italy only obtained cities whose majority of population was Italian, as well as a few islands, e.g. Cres, Lošinj, and Lastovo. Additionally, Italy wanted Rijeka, which was not subject to the Pact of London; nevertheless, Rijeka became part of Italy in 1924.

77 The Treaty of Rapallo was signed between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Italy on 12 November 1920.

78 More on the subject can be found in Cattaruzza, Italy and Its Eastern Border; Verginella, Marta. *Meja drugih; Sluga, The Problem of Trieste and the ItaloYugoslav Border*.

fascist Italy and communist Soviet Union, and was closely followed by the irredentist goals of Hungary, Romania, and, in part, Bulgaria that frequently led to their mutual conflicts for the same territories. In 1942, at the height of such expansion, the territory controlled by the Axis Powers extended from the shores of the Atlantic in France to the outskirts of Moscow and Stalingrad. It could be said that at the time the European continent was not a territory of independent, majority nation states. Europe saw the re-emergence of imperialism that produced a mixture of state formations, occupied territories and disfigured protectorates, such as Bohemia and Moravia, as well as the Kingdom of Denmark, that were occupied territories in practically all respects but still (at that time) legal formulations.⁷⁹

Revisionist states pursued different policies in their respective annexed territories. For the most part, Bulgaria strove for the return of territories that had been lost in the Balkan Wars. The occupation of modern-day North Macedonia and parts of Serbia was regarded as Bulgaria's liberated extension. Bulgarians were of the opinion that these territories were populated by a Bulgarian majority, and thus they were relatively quick to introduce their administration, schooling, language and the patriarchy of the Bulgarian Church.⁸⁰ However, it was difficult to make a distinction between annexed and occupied territories in areas that were populated predominately by foreign inhabitants. For instance, following the attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, Germany incorporated the territory of Białystok, Poland, in the East-Prussian administration, but this was never fully integrated into the German Reich. Instead, a special administrative unit (*Bezirk*) was introduced for it.⁸¹

By 1942, 270,000 km² of territory had been annexed to the Third Reich, 94% of which was in Eastern Europe. Owing to their geographical position, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania only annexed territories in Eastern Europe. Bulgaria was very successful in this regard, and more than making up for its WWI territorial losses managed to annexe 52,000 km².⁸² Failing to reach its pre-WWI size, Hungary was not as successful. Nevertheless, it still regained as much as 85% of the previously lost territories. Romania was the least successful revisionist power. Having obtained territories after World War I, these territories were lost to Hungary and the Soviet Union after the outbreak of World War II.⁸³

The occupied territories in Eastern Europe saw the arrival of a new occupying state on several occasions, e.g. Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, which was occupied by the

79 Mazower, *Hitler's Empire*.

80 Dimitrov, *Bulgarian Neutrality*.

81 Arad, *The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, Chapter 19.

82 About 14,000 km² were lost during World War I.

83 Crampton and Crampton, *Atlas of Western Europe in the Twentieth Century*; De Groot, *Building the New Order: 1938–1945*. Spatial History Lab: <https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=51#-footnote 23> (accessed: March 2020).

Soviets in line with the Ribentropp–Molotov Pact, was returned to Lithuanians when the bilateral treaty was signed. However, in June 1940 the Soviet Union occupied the whole of Lithuania, which was subsequently, in 1941, occupied by Germany after its attack on the Soviet Union. In 1944, Vilnius was occupied by the Soviets once again.⁸⁴ Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia repeatedly became part of Romania and of the Soviet Union until they finally ended up in the latter in 1944. There are dozens of similar cases.⁸⁵ The occupation was therefore never a guarantee for the consolidation of occupation borders during wartime, especially not between opponents, but even between allies the borders were subject to frequent changes.



Fig. 18: The German Reich at the height of its expansion.

84 More can be read on the subject in Hinden and Lane, *The Baltic and the Outbreak of the Second World War*.

85 Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century and After*, 179–181.

Following the end of World War II and the shifting borders that so deeply affected the local populations, the borders were more or less restored to their pre-war courses after the armistice, particularly thanks to the influence of the victorious states led by the US and Great Britain. Back in 1941, these two states pledged not to gain new territories because of the war and that after the end of the war all territorial adjustments would be determined in line with the principle of national self-determination.⁸⁶ The Soviet Union gained the most territory with the end of the war, namely 476,000 km², more than had been obtained by Germany at the height of its expansion.⁸⁷

86 The Atlantic Charter was signed by the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill on 14 August 1941. Its eight clauses represented the goals of both states and an outline of the underpinnings of the post-war world order. The principles of the Atlantic Charter were recognized by 26 allied states, which signed the United Nations Declaration on 1 January 1942.

87 De Groot, *Building the New Order*.

The Occupation of Yugoslavia and the Outline of Occupation Borders

In the interwar period the revisionist and counter-revisionist policies faced off against each other in the arena of international relations in the Balkans. Bulgaria and Hungary directed their irredentist tendencies towards the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Greece, and Romania. Feeling threatened, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Romania, along with Czechoslovakia and France, established the Little Entente back in 1921, an alliance directed especially against Hungary.⁸⁸ Fascist Italy soon proved to be the greatest revisionist power in the Balkans, seeking to reduce France's geostrategic influence in this area and establish its own sphere of interest, particularly by placing Albania in a completely subjugated position and putting Yugoslavia and Greece under pressure. Consequently, in 1934, Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania, and Turkey formed another alliance, i.e. the Balkan Pact, with the intention of preserving the geostrategic status quo.⁸⁹

With the rise of Nazism in Germany, the Balkans slowly entered the German sphere of interest as well, particularly as an area for exploiting natural resources. Following the annexation of Austria and the attack on Poland, *Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft*, an organization by means of which Germany began to tie the Balkan states to itself, was established in Vienna in 1940. The Balkan states were to supply Germany with chromium, magnesium, copper, nickel, aluminium and sheet metal.⁹⁰ Romania was put under the most intense pressure due to the abundance of its oil facilities. It was stipulated in the agreement signed with Germany in 1940 that oil was to be sold at a low, fixed price, which allowed for further advancement of the German military apparatus and helped with economic production, that was in a difficult position due to the Allies' economic blockade since 1939. Being forced to hand over Bessarabia and northern Bukovina to

⁸⁸ Case, *Revisionism in Regional Perspective*, 74–79.

⁸⁹ Avramovski, *Balkanska antanta*.

⁹⁰ Orlow, *The Nazis in the Balkans*.

the Soviet Union, parts of Transylvania to Hungary and Dobruja to Bulgaria, Romania was completely subordinated geo-strategically as well. The German troops controlled all Romanian strategic structures, and German instructors trained the Romanian army. In November 1940, Romania joined the Tripartite Pact.⁹¹ Hungary followed suit, and due to its association with Germany, it obtained territories at the expense of Slovakia.⁹² By the end of 1940, Germany had also carried out a successful economic subjugation of Bulgaria. Large numbers of German troops arrived in this country in 1941, immediately after the accession to the Tripartite Pact, which was an important strategic decision in terms of consolidating German positions as regards the Soviet Union.⁹³

Initially, Yugoslavia did not play a significant part in Hitler's military goals, even though he said in a conversation with Benito Mussolini that, since he was an Austrian, he was familiar with parts of Yugoslavia and the mentality of its peoples.⁹⁴ In his fundamental work *Mein Kampf* there are a few negative references to Yugoslavia, particularly to Serbia; however, Hitler did not pay much attention to this area.⁹⁵ While it is true that the territories of Slovenia, Croatia, and Vojvodina were under Habsburg rule for a long time, Hitler did not exploit this historical fact to the extent that he did in other parts of Eastern Europe. Article 3 of the secret part of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact could even be interpreted as Hitler not having any interest in advancing to south-eastern Europe.⁹⁶ The growing scale of the war, however, meant that Germany had to secure as many raw materials as possible. Yugoslavia was the second richest state in terms of natural resources in the Balkans, behind only Romania. Consequently, Hitler left some room for manoeuvre in the division of Europe with Italy, according to which Germany would obtain Eastern Europe and Italy the Mediterranean. However, Hitler was reluctant to outline the borders in Yugoslavia for strategic reasons,⁹⁷ despite Italy's repeated argument that the Mediterranean belonged to it and extended as far as the Danube river basin.⁹⁸ On 26 March 1939, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the First Fascist Squad, Mussolini said that the geographical, political, historical, and military

91 Deletant, *Hitler's Forgotten Ally*, 8–27. The Tripartite Pact is an agreement concluded by Germany, Italy, and Japan on 27 September 1940. Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia joined in 1940, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia in 1941. The Independent State of Croatia (NDH) joined the Tripartite Pact after the occupation of Yugoslavia.

92 Cornelius, *Hungary in World War II*, 91–93, 137–138.

93 Miller, *Bulgaria during the Second World War*, 37, 45–46.

94 Van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy 1940–1941*, 3.

95 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*.

96 Article 3 of the secret part of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact says: “With regard to South-Eastern Europe attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political disinterest in these areas.” This text is somewhat ambiguous because it is unclear if it refers solely to the area of Bessarabia or to entire South-Eastern Europe.

97 Toscano, *Le origini diplomatiche del Patto d'Acciaio*, 221.

98 Van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy*, 5.

territory of the Mediterranean was of key importance to Italy. He did not forget to add that, when speaking about the Mediterranean, the bay that was referred to as the Adriatic was, naturally, also included, and that the Italian interest in the Slavs was dominant but that they were not the only interested party.⁹⁹ Germany's response to these words was very ambiguous. Hitler never refuted Mussolini or his diplomats directly and, at the same time, never made any guarantees that Yugoslavia and the broader Balkan area would belong to them.

The relations between Yugoslavia and Germany were relatively friendly before the outbreak of the war, and were based mostly on economic agreements. Mussolini's approach to Yugoslavia was different; he used Yugoslavia's internal tensions and initially collaborated with Croatian autonomists, particularly with the Ustashe movement led by Ante Pavelić. Mussolini then changed his policy and worked in closer liaison with the government led by Milan Stojadinović when he realized that his connection with the Ustashe could force Belgrade to form a military alliance with Germany. With Milan Stojadinović as prime minister, Yugoslavia began to form closer bonds with revisionist states by leaving the Balkan Pact in 1937, concluding the Treaty of Eternal Friendship with Bulgaria and Italy, as well as a series of economic agreements with Germany.¹⁰⁰ However, Stojadinović was deposed in February 1939 because he appeared to have had Mussolini as a role model.¹⁰¹ To further its interests, Italy once again supported an independent Croatia that would eventually follow the Albanian example and form a union with Italy. However, led by Vladko Maček, the Croatian autonomist movement soon turned towards Germany.¹⁰² Mussolini thus began to advocate for a united Yugoslavia and for improving its relations with Hungary as an important barrier against Germany's movement towards the Adriatic.¹⁰³

However, Mussolini was too impulsive, this change in direction was short-lived, and soon after he resumed his collaboration with Belgrade. Affected by different types of pressure that was contingent upon the situation within the state, Yugoslav foreign policy was confusing and contradictory, which – on the positive side – enabled Yugoslavia to steer clear of any open conflict. Yugoslavia thus did not pose a serious threat to Italy, and the latter occupied Albania in April 1939. At that point Italy wanted but was unable to repeat this endeavour in Yugoslavia. Indeed, Italy did not actively engage in conflicts for a long time after the outbreak of World War II. Even when Mussolini published his war plans on 31 March 1940, the Italian intervention was limited to the Balkans. Therefore this was a plan for a parallel war that Italy would wage without

99 Mussolini, *Speech in Rome*.

100 Stojković, *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi*, 411–414.

101 See also: Bakić, *Milan Stojadinović*.

102 Van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy*, 6.

103 Ibid.

Germany.¹⁰⁴ Judging from his plan, Mussolini was tempted mostly by Croatia. He held talks with Ante Pavelić about mutual support as early as in January 1940. In late April, Marshall Rodolfo Graziani produced a plan for the offensive on Yugoslavia that would begin in June 1940. Hitler's letter brought these plans to a halt, as he was not convinced that Italy would succeed. Additionally, Germany and Yugoslavia signed an important agreement about supplying raw materials in October 1939, which would have been cancelled if Italy had made a military intervention. From a strategic point of view, Hitler was afraid that Hungary and Bulgaria could get involved in the conflict and drag Romania with them, and he could not afford the outbreak of a conflict of such dimensions during his advance in the west.

In the following months Germany exerted constant pressure on Italy, offering various reasons as to why an attack on Yugoslavia could not take place. The concentration of power needed for an attack on Great Britain was given as one of the reasons, as was the concern that an attack would escalate the war throughout the region. However, such entreaties did not prevent Mussolini from forging plans for attacking Yugoslavia. In early August 1940, he made a proposition to Germany to open a front against Yugoslavia in the territory of Carinthia and Styria, which was rejected by the German military leaders.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, Yugoslavia had almost no allies, only Western countries' moral support. Without the support of the Great Powers and due to significant pressure exerted by Italy and Germany, Yugoslavia declared neutrality. However, with Italy constantly undermining German interests in Yugoslavia, this policy could not be pursued in the long run. Indeed, the pressure exerted by Germany only increased. In early March 1941, Hitler tried to convince the Yugoslav regent Prince Paul that it was necessary for his country to join the Tripartite Pact. Hitler even informed the regent of Germany's imminent attack on the Soviet Union,¹⁰⁶ hinting that it would be wise for Yugoslavia to join the pact. Still, the country persisted in its wavering politics because it was faced with widespread distrust due to its collaboration with fascist states, as well as with an outburst of strikes in the years 1939 and 1940, a result of the growing decline in wages and of the new economic and political crisis brought about by the onset of war in Europe. The government put down these strikes using severe measures, banned the operation of trade unions and decided to establish a concentration camp in Bileća, in modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. Firearms were used against participants in the demonstrations held on 14 December 1940 in Belgrade. At the same time the government decreed rent controls, food reserves, requisitions, and price caps for food, and even introduced bread and flour stamps in early 1941. However, as early as in the spring of 1941 the authorities were no longer able to control the situation. Large demonstrations broke out when

104 Gooch, *Mussolini's strategy*, 136.

105 Gooch, *Mussolini's strategy*, 140.

106 Kitchen, *British Policy Towards the Soviet Union*, 48.

Yugoslavia's accession to the Tripartite Pact on 25 March 1941 became known. Assisted by the British intelligence service, a group of officers led by the Yugoslav Air Force generals Borivoje Mirković and Dušan Simović carried out a coup, declaring King Peter II an adult, doing away with the regency and, concurrently, confirming the accession to the Tripartite Pact.¹⁰⁷ The new government, consisting of representatives of the Yugoslav Muslim organization, the Slovene People's Party, and the Serbian Cultural Club,¹⁰⁸ gave public assurance that the Pact would remain in force. At the same time, the government engaged in secret negotiations with Great Britain to leave the Pact, but with little success. On account of discord, confusion and conflicts between different factions within it,¹⁰⁹ the new government was incapable of ensuring consent in terms of either internal or external policy. With the Hitler having conquered most of Europe, Great Britain fighting for its existence and the Soviet Union's non-aggression treaty with Germany, the new government had no room for manoeuvre. Fearing Germany, it did not even dare to order a total mobilization. This political agony was ended only by the war.¹¹⁰

Hitler learned about the coup in the late morning and immediately called a summit meeting.¹¹¹ Although it is maintained in most of the literature that the German army was not prepared for an attack on Yugoslavia, it was recorded in the Nuremberg Trials¹¹² that the Chief of the German General Staff Franz Halder and Field Marshall Wilhelm von Keitel began to work on the attack on Yugoslavia in October 1940.¹¹³ Enraged by Yugoslavia's unreliability, Hitler declared Serbs and Slovenes to be traditionally anti-German oriented and decided to attack Yugoslavia with his allies.¹¹⁴ Italy was particularly happy to hear this, and Mussolini was glad that the question of delimiting these areas of interest would be resolved with Hitler. Bulgaria and Hungary were called to join the attack that same day in exchange for territorial concessions. However, their respective responses were not to Hitler's liking. Boris, the King of Bulgaria, refused to join the attack but did not refuse to occupy parts of Yugoslav territory. Meanwhile, Hungarians limited their operation to ten infantry and armoured units that would become active

107 Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 9–10.

108 The Serbian Cultural Club was a political organization founded in 1937. It strove for the formation of Greater Serbia within a federal monarchy.

109 *Inter alia*, the conflicts stemmed from the fact that almost half the ministers in the new government came from the previous one that had been overthrown.

110 Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 10.

111 Alongside Hitler, the meeting was attended by Ribbentrop, Keitel, Alfred Jodl, Hermann Göring, Walther von Brauchitsch, Adolf Heusinger, and Enno von Rintelen.

112 The Nuremberg Trials were held between 1945–1949 against defendants who were representatives of the former Nazi regime.

113 Van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy*, 145. More on the meeting and the decision to attack in Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 106, 107.

114 Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 10.

only after the initial attack.¹¹⁵ Germany took the preparation for the invasion seriously despite having – contrary to its expectations – a relatively simple task. The Yugoslav army had outdated weapons and was unable to offer much resistance.¹¹⁶ On top of that, the Yugoslav territory was split in a traditional manner, i.e. in a war zone and rear area, and the military doctrine was based on the experience gained in the Balkan Wars and World War I, i.e. waging front warfare. It was unable to implement mobilization in less than a week's time, managing to mobilize less than a half of a total of 1,200,000 conscripts. The General Staff planned the defence of the entire 3,000-km long border, along which weak fortifications had been built in the pre-war years. The Yugoslav army would gradually withdraw southwards, where it would open a new "Salonica" front together with its allies, which was easily prevented by German mobile troops.¹¹⁷

The attack on Yugoslavia began in the early hours of 6 April 1941. Having been provided detailed information by informants from the ranks of the *Volksdeutsche*,¹¹⁸ Ustashe and other informants, the German Luftwaffe initially attacked airfields and other important military structures and, subsequently, cities. The brutal attack on Belgrade, which took place on the first day of the April War, is particularly well known. The Luftwaffe entered from Austria and Bulgaria, and German motorized troops and infantry followed suit. They advanced via the Slovene territory towards the Croatian cities of Varaždin, Zagreb, and Karlovac. When the Germans successfully completed their campaign to Zagreb and Karlovac, cutting off Yugoslavia's western part from its centre, the Italian troops, arriving from the annexed territories on the other side of the Rapallo border¹¹⁹ on 11 April, began to advance in the direction of Ljubljana and Kočevje, continuing towards Bosnia from the northern side and towards the Adriatic from the southern side. The Italian army expected to be met with strong resistance, but this was not the case. Concurrently, the Hungarian occupying troops relocated to Prekmurje, Slavonija, and Vojvodina. Initially, the Yugoslav army was positioned along the border, but its troops were poorly organized and only partly mobilized, and they retreated to the country's interior. During their retreat, the Yugoslav troops set ablaze many military depots and intentionally destroyed infrastructure to prevent the occupiers from making

115 Originally, it was announced that the attack would take place on 14 April; however, the actual attack took place on 11 April. Van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy*, 148.

116 On the eve of World War II the Royal Yugoslav Army had enough ammunition for 75 days of infantry operations, 100 days of artillery operations and up to a week of anti-aircraft defence. In total, it had 110 tanks, 60 of which were from the period of World War I and 50 of which were state of the art and had been purchased the year before, which implies that the tank units lacked experience and were poorly trained. The air force consisted of 459 aircrafts of all types; meanwhile, the navy had only 32 vessels at sea and another four on the Danube. More can be read on the subject in *Vojna enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, IV, 250–252; Čulinović, *Slom stare Jugoslavije*, 162–168.

117 Terzić, *Slom kraljevine Jugoslavije*, 250–252.

118 Germans living outside Germany.

119 More can be read on the Rapallo border in Ajlec, Zorn & Mikša, *Zapadna jugoslavenska granica*, 91–97.

use of it.¹²⁰ The defence line consisting of fortifications and bunkers on the Rapallo border, the so-called Rupnik Line, remained unused. In Gorenjska, near Gozd-Mar-tuljek, just one group of volunteers engaged in a conflict with the Italian troops. Other volunteers, who gathered despite opposition from the Yugoslav Royal Army and refused to collaborate with communists, gathered in Novo Mesto. This group was about 3,000 strong, some of its members were communists but the bulk of them were emigrants from Primorska, who regarded the war as an opportunity to change the western border. Starting from Dolenjska, they set off towards Zagreb and partly towards the Adriatic coast. The majority of them were quick to return because the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) led by the collaborationist Ustashe movement was established on 10 April.¹²¹ The king and the government left the country, and on 17 April representatives of the High Command of the Yugoslav Army signed an unconditional capitulation. Most of the Yugoslav army was captured and the country dismembered.¹²²



Fig. 19: A German map showing the partition of Yugoslavia.

120 E.g. the railroad viaduct at Borovnica.

121 Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 13.

122 Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 12.

This was not merely a case of occupation, this was also a case of *debellatio*. *Debellatio* (total subordination) is a legal term that refers to the partition of a state. This is a situation in which a country's authority is destroyed and ceases to operate fully or in part. The state is unable to exercise authority over its territory or its nation, and there is no subject of international law to conclude a peace treaty with. Aggressor states advocated for the *debellatio* of Yugoslavia in accordance with Hitler's position expressed on 27 April 1941 (following the coup in Belgrade), when he maintained that Yugoslavia must be destroyed as a state. In doing so, aggressor states justified the completed or planned annexation of parts of Yugoslav (Slovene) territory. The *debellatio* was not recognized by Great Britain (and, subsequently, the anti-fascist coalition), or the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile.

However, it was recognized by the Slovene People's Party (SLS), which was at the time the leading Slovene party. Following the onset of World War II (with the German attack on Poland on 1 September 1939) and the subsequent Nazi and fascist conquests, the SLS built its political strategy on the belief that the dominance of the Axis Powers was a certainty, and that Yugoslavia must adjust to the new racist and totalitarian order. Dr Anton Korošec had pursued this political strategy even before the attack on Yugoslavia, and his successors Kulovec and Krek reinforced it in the party's leadership, as did Natlačen in Slovenia. The assessment that Yugoslavia would disintegrate led them to seek a solution in a German protectorate. Fearing the Germans, Korošec began to carry out a distinctly Germanophile policy after Paris had fallen to the Nazis in June 1940. Korošec and his party chose the "new order" on the ideological level, as well. Faced with a choice between Western liberal parliamentary democracy and the Axis Powers and their totalitarianism, Korošec, an opponent of Germany up to that point (his appointment as the Minister of Education in June 1940 was met with great discontent in Germany), opted for the latter. He demanded a pro-German government and advocated for the Aryanization of Yugoslavia; as a minister, he proclaimed himself to be a nationalist and a socialist (thus following a form of National Socialism modelled after the German example), pursued distinctly antisemitic policies, advocated for fascist corporativism, anti-liberalism, anticommunism, and associated himself with the far-right movement (the fascist Greater Serbia movement led by Ljotić). His main problem was that Germans did not "call" him. He said the following to his informant, the journalist and admirer Milan Jovanović Stoimirović: "I wish [...] I knew what Germans wanted, so we could do it; they should tell us what kind of a box they want and we shall make it; but we do not know what they want. [...] Corporativism is impossible here, we lack the apparatus and staff for that. I have nothing against training young people as it is done in Germany. In general, I do not mind doing everything that must be done, as long as it does not affect the Church."¹²³ His

123 More can be read on the subject in Božo Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, Bojan Godeša, *Čas odločitev*.

words bear witness to how “the leader of the Slovene People’s Party was willing to subjugate to Germans and to the new order of his own accord, without any pressure exerted by Germans. Korošec’s words reveal the basic guidelines of the subsequent operation of the Slovene People’s Party, indicating that the Catholic camp came to terms with Germany’s dominance in the international arena and was willing to completely adapt and integrate into the totalitarian Nazi regime.”¹²⁴ The Catholic press published theses about the disintegration of the West, the “new order” emerging in Europe, as well as words of praise for Marshal Pétain and his policy in France, one that was – it was claimed – underpinned by religion, tradition, and family. Additionally, Pétain’s collaborationist policy became a model for what Yugoslavia’s foreign policy. Korošec and the Catholic camp saw Nazi Germany as a defence against communism and the Soviet Union, something which they did not conceal. They were concerned only about the question of religion and that of religion-based political operations, which the Nazis regarded with disfavour. Korošec figured that with the help of the supporters of Ljotić, Nedić, and Frank (Ustashe) Yugoslavia could see the introduction of a social order modelled after Nazism, the only difference being that the Church would be left alone. The policy that he pursued caused him to become increasingly isolated among Yugoslav leaders, although it proved to be very useful for Germany’s interests in Yugoslavia, which they quickly took advantage of. The Germans believed in Korošec’s sincerity due to the ideological aspect of his operations and that of the Catholic camp (fighting against Jews, communists and Freemasons, support for anti-liberalism, as well as his focus on corporativism, all of which was in line with the Nazis’ political direction). Korošec did not manage to visit Berlin or Rome (the latter was prevented by the Yugoslav authorities); however, he was in close contact with German diplomats. He regarded reliance on Germany as the only solution, considering Russia to be an enemy and Great Britain a ruin. He was a fairly committed Yugoslav, and is believed to have coined the saying that “for Slovenes, the worst Yugoslavia is the best solution”. In the spring of 1940 he briefly thought about the (utopian) possibility of a Danube confederation, within which Slovenia would be independent, obtain Trieste and be under the British protectorate. Due to his focus on Nazi Germany, his political contemporaries accused Korošec of being an opportunistic rather than a true Yugoslav, and that he saw Yugoslavia as something that could be terminated. Prince Paul also explained to the American delegate that he had been forced to join the Tripartite Pact (along with the other two regents and the Yugoslav National Party, which was in opposition) by the Croats and Slovenes, and he was convinced that these two groups would refuse to fight in the event of a war. In the months leading up to his death, Korošec believed firmly that Yugoslavia could not be saved and would fall “*wie ein Kartenhaus*” (like a house of cards).

124 Godeša, 33–34.

Korošec's successors (he died in November 1940) continued to search for a solution only in the scope of the new Nazi order. Unlike Korošec, Dr Fran Kulovec, who succeeded him and was a priest himself, was more favourably disposed towards bonding with the Croatian Peasant Party and Vladko Maček (who wanted a dualist Yugoslavia, with Slovenes being subordinated to Croats). He continued to pursue Korošec's policy, and was the first to speak clearly in favour of joining the Tripartite Pact in the Crown Council. The British regarded the Slovene People's Party – and Slovenia (as well as Croatia) in general – as being increasingly positively disposed towards Germany and the fascist Axis Powers. They were convinced that the Slovenes and Croats would not fight, and thus the British sought to convince the king and Serbian politicians to base their military defence on old Serbia's borders in the event of a war, a plan that was rejected by the Serbian side. On 30 March 1941, three days after the pro-Western coup d'état of 27 March, the leaders of the Slovene People's Party made a decision to send two representatives of the party abroad and that the party, its organizations or officials could not and would not collaborate in any capacity with the hostile authorities or hostile fascist or Nazi organizations (according to another interpretation of the meeting, this did not apply to economic matters, and it should also be noted that testimonies about the aforementioned decision also differ). However, this position was abandoned within a day. Kulovec was more or less forced to become a minister in Simović's government, dragging Dr Miha Krek along with him, and was as a minister a fervent advocate for the country to remain a member of the Tripartite Pact and rely on Germany. It became clear on 1 April that the Germans intended to establish the Independent State of Croatia (*Neodvisna država Hrvatska* – NDH), and on 3 April the leaders of the Slovene People's Party decided to establish the National Council to prepare for the new circumstances. They figured that they would be able to establish a Slovene state with Nazi support. Even before the attack on Yugoslavia, Kulovec and Krek had decided to follow the Croatian example. On 5 April, they went to the Slovak embassy and asked the diplomat Ivan Milec to speak to the German authorities on their behalf.

The two men did not dare to contact the German embassy directly because they were afraid that they might be killed in Belgrade for doing so. As attested by a report written by the German chargé d'affaires in Belgrade, who was informed about the visit and message by his Slovak counterpart on that same day, Kulovec and Krek's position was that war was imminent and would bring about the end of Yugoslavia. "Unless a specific solution is found for Slovenia, Slovenes, as well as Croats, will have to perish along with Serbs. Because they care more about their country than they do about the Yugoslav state, they found a different way out. At any rate, this way out must be found and executed in collaboration with Germany. There are two possibilities: 1. Independent Slovenia. 2. Slovenia and Croatia forming a common state. There are fears in Slovenia

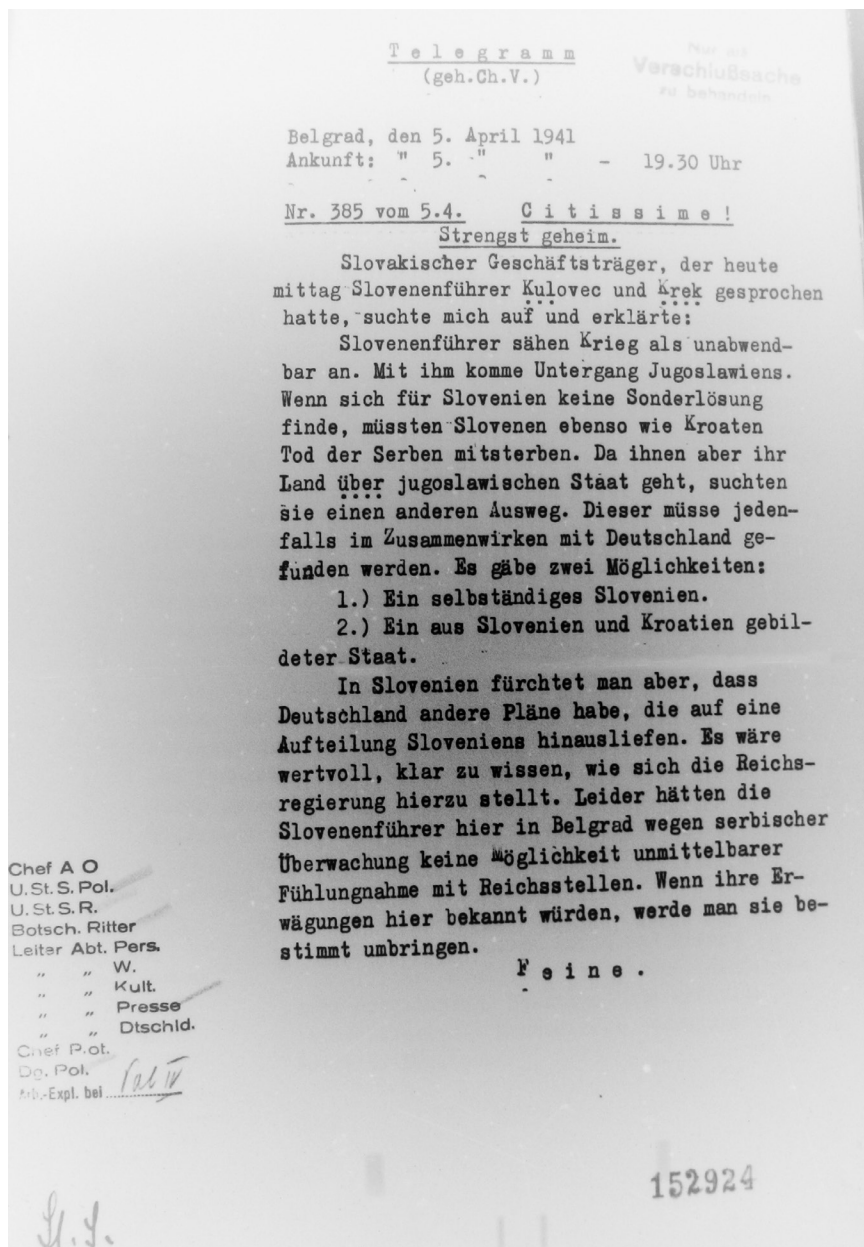


Fig. 20: A German report about Kulovec and Krek's visit to the Slovak embassy and their requests that were passed on to the German embassy in Belgrade.

that Germany has other plans, namely plans aiming to divide Slovenia. Knowing the position of the German government on this subject would be invaluable. Unfortunately, it is impossible for these two Slovene leaders to contact the Reich's institutions in Belgrade because they are controlled by the Serbian security service. There is no doubt that they would be executed if their position were known."¹²⁵

Kulovec was killed the following day, during the bombing of Belgrade, and Krek emigrated; their policy in Slovenia was continued by Dr Marko Natlačen. It should be added that Bishop Rožman had sympathy for Croatia (the NDH's "Catholic character") as well, and soon after the establishment of the NDH he started lobbying for the Pope to grant an audience to Ante Pavelić.

Tardini, the Vatican Secretary of State, wrote that Rožman gave a firm assurance and the warmest recommendations that Pavelić was a Catholic, and that the new Croatian state was Catholic as well. The audience took place and the Vatican thus incurred the wrath and protests of the Yugoslav Government-in-Exile and Western diplomats. For instance, Great Britain stated that this was the first time that an important religious leader had granted an audience to an internationally known murderer.

Locally speaking, the policy that had been devised was followed by the former head of the Drava Banovina, Dr Marko Natlačen, whose stance was also defeatist and who wanted to convince the Yugoslav military commanders not to put up a fight against the German forces. He sought to get in touch with the Germans. He had already been received by an officer in Celje in the period when the Italian army occupied the Province of Ljubljana, but had not been given any guarantees. Disappointed and aware of the fact that Slovenia would be dismembered, the bourgeois politicians turned to Italy and began to collaborate enthusiastically. Thrilled with their servility, Mussolini initially promised them a protectorate and eventually annexed the Province of Ljubljana to Italy, which was greeted warmly by the Slovene politicians and press. Slovene figures went to Rome to pay their respects, visited fascist symbolic memorials, and Bishop Rožman celebrated a Mass for fascist victories. It was not difficult for the occupying forces to divide Slovenia because nobody put up a fight, not until the Liberation Front was established. Consequently, the partition was, at least as far as Slovenes were concerned, a smooth one.

125 Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin Pol XII Die Umsiedlung der Deutschen aus der Provinz Laibach.

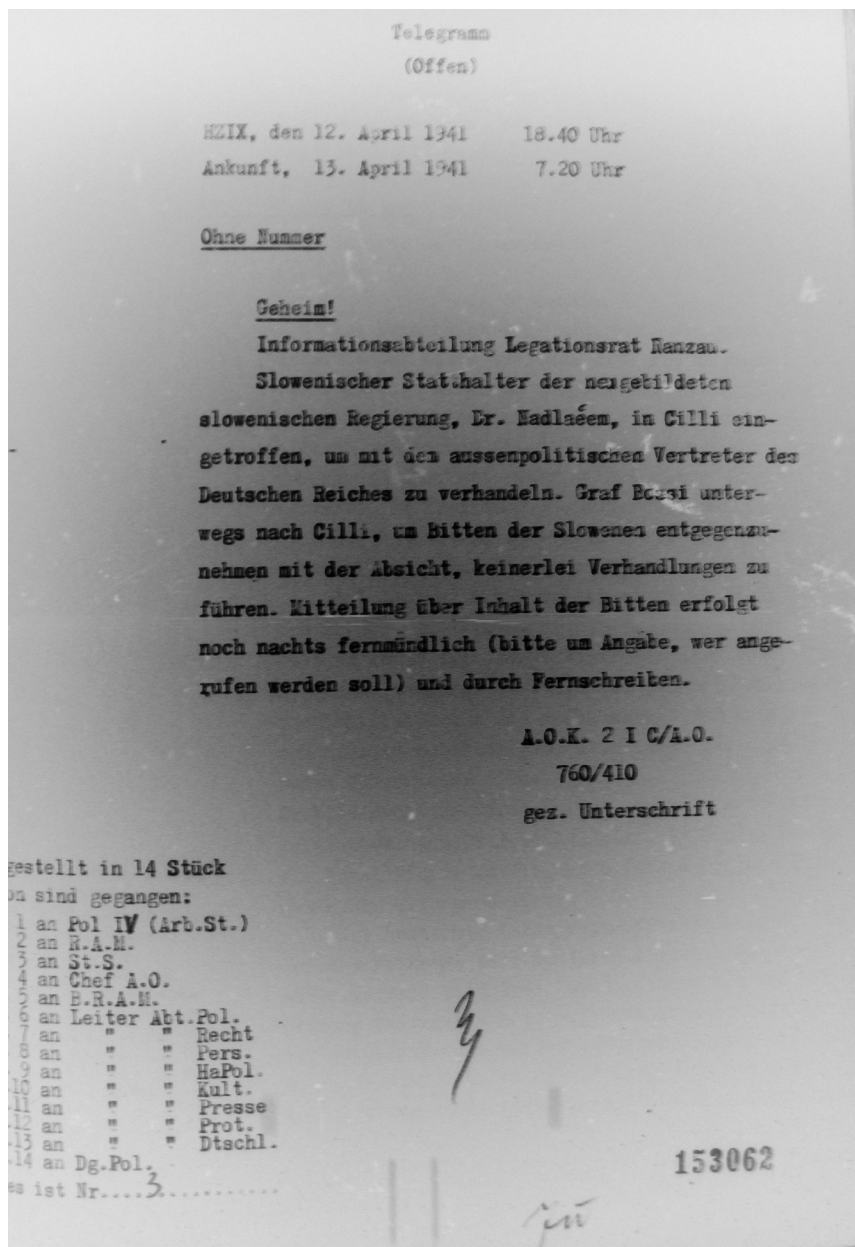


Fig. 21: Information about the former head of the Drava Banovina, Dr Marko Natlačen, visiting the German troops in Celje, and his aim to establish contacts with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This visit was deemed a failure and, subsequently, he turned to Italy.

Outlining the Occupation Borders in Slovenia

Following the attack on Yugoslavia, Slovene territory became a meeting point of four irredentist, revisionist and nationalist powers. By introducing occupation borders, these powers divided the area's Slovene population into four state entities wherein there was no room for Slovenes any longer. Each of the four occupation regimes, i.e. the German, Italian, and Hungarian regimes, and that of the Ustashe-led NDH, sought to justify their right to dismember Slovenia. Italy was convinced that by obtaining new territories the injustices stemming from the non-materialization of the 1915 Treaty of London would be remedied at least in part. However, Italy did not have any historical grounds for occupying central Slovene territories.

Building upon the belief dating back to the period of the *Risorgimento*,¹²⁶ Italians believed that their national borders extended as far as the Julian Alps, which was achieved with the Treaty of Rapallo after World War I. Hitler thus assigned the central, economically poorly developed part of the Slovene territory to Italy. It was named the Province of Ljubljana (Provincia di Lubiana) and annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. This was a case of expanding the empire after the Roman example but, at the same time, the occupation was also regarded as an occupation for entirely pragmatic reasons. Namely, Italy wanted to keep Germany as far away as possible from the Rapallo border. It envisaged a quick assimilation of the occupied territory in the national sense, by settling the area and Italianizing the Slovene population, a goal that would be completed by the end of the war or soon after it.¹²⁷ Until that point they decided to keep the Rapallo border in place because they regarded areas obtained after World War I as being part of the Italian national territory. After Italy's capitulation in 1943, the entire territory remained formally part of Mussolini's fascist republic but came, in fact, under the Nazi administration. The Province of Ljubljana became part of the so-called Operational Adriatic Coastline Zone, with headquarters in Trieste.¹²⁸

126 The *Risorgimento* was a movement approximately between 1815 and 1870 that strove for the unification of Italy.

127 Additional reading, e.g.: Biber, *Nacizem in Nemci v Jugoslaviji 1933–1941*.

128 Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 10–11.

German politics associated the annexation with the Austrian administrative possession in the Habsburg Monarchy. Much like the case with Hungary, specific political circles in Austria and, subsequently, Germany did not want to give up territories that became part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes with the Treaty of Saint-Germain.

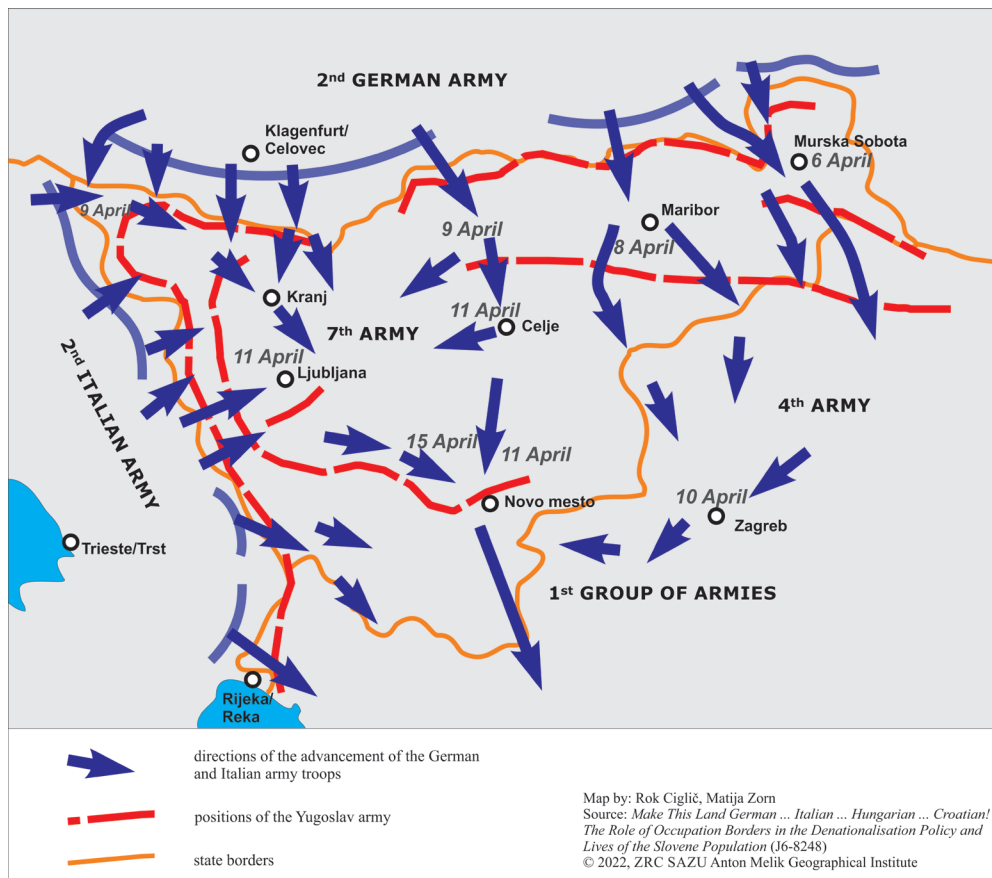


Fig. 22: The directions from which the occupying armies advanced.

From the Carinthian plebiscite onwards, calls were issued to revise Yugoslavia's northern border along the so-called Vitanje line (*Weitensteinerzug*), or the hydrological divide between rivers Drava and Sava, in the so-called Jesenice Triangle in Gorenjska, which included the area of Bohinj, as well as in the Meža Valley. Demands were made to include territories extending as far as the river Sava, with Dr Friederich Lange, who

was nicknamed Adriaticus, putting forward the most excessive claim. In his writings, he demanded that the German nation have access to the Adriatic Sea.¹²⁹ In Austrian Carinthia and Styria, local revisionists became very active in the summer of 1940, when they wrote memorandums addressed to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, demanding a change of the northern border and the annexation of Slovene territories to the Third Reich. According to the authors, Slovenes inhabited “the German cultural soil”. Failing to show the presence of the German population throughout the area of interest, they declared the majority of Slovenes to be Windische, i.e. people speaking a Slavic dialect who were German in spirit.¹³⁰ Germans intended to turn the Slovene territory into the German Reich’s southern border, similar to as in the past, when Slovene lands had been the march of the Frankish Empire and of the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy.¹³¹ The civil administration, which was introduced on 14 April 1941, would be of a temporary nature. The German-occupied zone was divided into two administrative units, namely Lower Styria and Gorenjska with the Meža Valley, which were originally headquartered in Maribor and Bled, respectively. Subsequently, the headquarters were transferred to Klagenfurt and Graz. They were led by respective heads of civil administration and the administrative apparatus was staffed solely by Germans. According to the original plans, the occupied territory would be integrated into the Reich on 1 October 1941. Anticipating a swift integration, both administrative units were reorganized according to the German principle of districts and counties, German offices were introduced and German racial laws applied, which was tantamount to the eradication of the Slovene nation. The formal annexation was put off due to personnel-related issues and, subsequently, due to the development of the resistance movement the intended integration did not take place. However, in practice the administration functioned as if the area were part of the Reich. Consequently, the German border with Italy and the NDH became Germany’s southern border, and was considered to be its buffer zone. Eventually, Germany gave the occupied provinces the same status as was at the time held by Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg.¹³² These were the so-called areas of civil administration (*Zivilverwaltung*) that in the annexed Slovene territories were helmed by Friedrich Rainer, head of the civil administration, who was also *Gauleiter* of Carinthia.¹³³

129 He wrote that that a small nation, totalling fewer heads than the population of Berlin, was blocking the Germans’ access to the Adriatic. More can be read on the subject in Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 181, and in Biber, *Nacizem in Nemci v Jugoslaviji*, 93–103.

130 Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 181.

131 They appropriated Koroška, Gorenjska, Štajerska, the Meža Valley, the regions of Obsotelje, Posavje, as well as four German-populated villages in Prekmurje.

132 Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 12–13.

133 Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 237.

Hungarians pursued their own policy of irredentism and the restoration of the former Greater Hungary that they had lost with the Treaty of Trianon. Much like the Germans, they substantiated their occupation on the basis of the historical tradition of administrative organization, wherein Prekmurje was part of the Hungarian half of the Habsburg Monarchy. However, not having been involved in the initial attack on Yugoslavia, Prekmurje was originally occupied by Germans, who soon handed it over to Hungarians, barring a few German villages in Goričko. Having taken over authority, the Hungarians established the military administration that was divided into two parts and subordinated to the Command of the military-administrative group of the Southern Army, which was initially headquartered in Subotica and then in Novi Sad. As early as in August 1941, the military administration was replaced by a civil one, and thus began the process of integrating of the occupied area into the Hungarian state. Prekmurje was divided into two historical counties: the Vas County and the Zala County, as had been the case under the rule of Austria-Hungary.¹³⁴

The NDH followed the unfounded, nationalist, pan-Croatian ideas that originated with Pavao Ritter Vitezović at the turn of the 18th century, who equated Croats with Slovenes and both nations with the ancient Illyrians. He divided the Croatian territory into several parts, one of which was White Croatia that included Alpine Croatia and was comprised of Slovene lands. A century and a half later, this idea of Alpine Croatia was revived by Ante Starčević in the period of the Illyrian movement, with Starčević popularizing this conception in the scope of nation states and territorial blood ties. Subsequently, this idea was also adopted by the Ustashe.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, the annexation of all of Alpine Croatia did not materialize. Before the war the Ustashe outlined the borders of Greater Croatia in the Triglav mountain range, but in fact only five villages in the Posavje region became part of Croatia, i.e. Bregansko Selo,¹³⁶ Nova Vas pri Bregani,¹³⁷ Jesenice na Dolenjskem, Obrežje, and Čedem, encompassing an area of about 20 km² that was populated by around 800 people. A few small territories in Štajerska and Dolenjska were annexed, as well.¹³⁸

The occupation of the Slovene ethnic territory in 1941 thus resulted in five different border areas and borders. These were:

1. the border between Germany and Hungary,
2. the border between Hungary and the NDH,
3. the border between Germany and the NDH,
4. the border between Italy and Germany,
5. the border between Italy and the NDH.

134 Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 10–11.

135 The subject of Alpine Croatia was addressed in detail by Zajc, Marko. *Kje se slovensko neha in hrvaško začne. Slovensko hrvaška meja v 19. in na začetku 20. stoletja*. Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2006.

136 Modern-day Slovenska Vas.

137 Modern-day Nova Vas pri Mokricah.

138 Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 10–11.

Despite the formal annexation of the so-called Province of Ljubljana to Italy, the Rapallo border remained in place, separating Slovenes in Primorska from their compatriots. Only the border with Croatia, which was based on old delimitations, is preserved to this day to any great extent. The borders totalled 665.5 km in length. The total length of occupation borders running in modern-day Slovenia is 665.5 km. The total length of all measured occupation borders (including those outside today's Republic of Slovenia) is upwards of 704 km.¹³⁹ They ran from the marshy river basins of the Mura and Drava as far as the summit of Triglav; from the river Sotla to Peč above Rateče; from Ljubljana's suburbs via the Polhov Gradec hills and the valley of the river Sora as far as Idrija and continuing onwards. The occupying forces closed off their respective territories by means of border barriers that separated their respective occupation zones. The formation of these borders was accompanied by wartime violence, deportations, and escapes from one occupation zone to another. At the same time, these borders were often crossed illegally due to the needs of the population and the partisan resistance movement, which refused to recognize the partition. Inevitably, all this resulted in many traumas and broke off the traditional patterns of migration, agriculture, and commerce.¹⁴⁰ The borders implied the adoption of different policies aimed at assimilating the local population in line with the principles of the new state formations. The occupying regimes thus resorted to ethnocidal and genocidal means that can be presented statistically – 58,522 Slovenes were taken to German and Italian concentration camps, 688 to Hungarian camps and about 400 to Croatian ones. Almost 20,000 people were confined or subject to forced labour, and some 80,000 imprisoned.

Five hundred and seventy-one Jews from Prekmurje were deported as well, the majority of whom was murdered in the Auschwitz concentration camp. The Germans intended to expel between 220,000 and 260,000 Slovenes, but in fact managed to expel only around 63,000 people.¹⁴¹ About 17,000 people managed to escape across the German-Italian border into the Italian occupation zone. Some of the 10,000 people who were expelled from the German occupation zone to the NDH also managed to escape or legally enter the Italian occupation zone. Around 17,000 Gottschee Germans were resettled from the Italian occupation zone to deserted Slovene territories along the Croatian border.¹⁴²

139 Matija Zorn, Rok Ciglič, Primož Gašperič: "Državne meje na ozemlju Slovenije med drugo svetovno vojno na podlagi kartografskega gradiva okupacijskih sil". Published in *Okupacijske meje v Sloveniji 1941–1945*, p. 206.

140 Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 12.

141 Based on Heinrich Himmler's guidelines, Germans were going to carry out ethnocide in the first five months of the occupation, i.e. by October 1941. More can be read on the subject in Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 74.

142 Scrutiny of the border between the NDH and Germany is thus particularly necessary; however, the lack of oral sources poses a problem, because there were no Slovenes there during the war and Germans fled from the area after the conflict ended. Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 11–12. More on the occupation policy and the consequences of the occupation can be found in Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 27, 32, 39, 51–53. Nevertheless, we managed to compile a few eyewitness testimonies: L. Rupar, *Za njih je bil program dober, za ostale pa slab, poguben*. I. Žnidaršič, *Rasno so nas pregledali, nato so nas 3. 11. 1941 izgnali*, L. Gramc, *Izgnali so nas v Šlezijo*, L. Gramc, *Djevojka Tita ubila*, A. Štihi, *Čelade so uporabljali za zajemanje gnojnice*, I. Tratar, *Samo, da smo prišli domov*, M. Jesenko, *Podirali al pa šus*, V. Hribar, *Levi breg Krke so izselili*, A. Hočevnar, *Okupacijska meja v Krmelju*. The complete list of testimonies, including keywords, can be retrieved from *Videoposnetki pri projektu Okupacijske meje*.



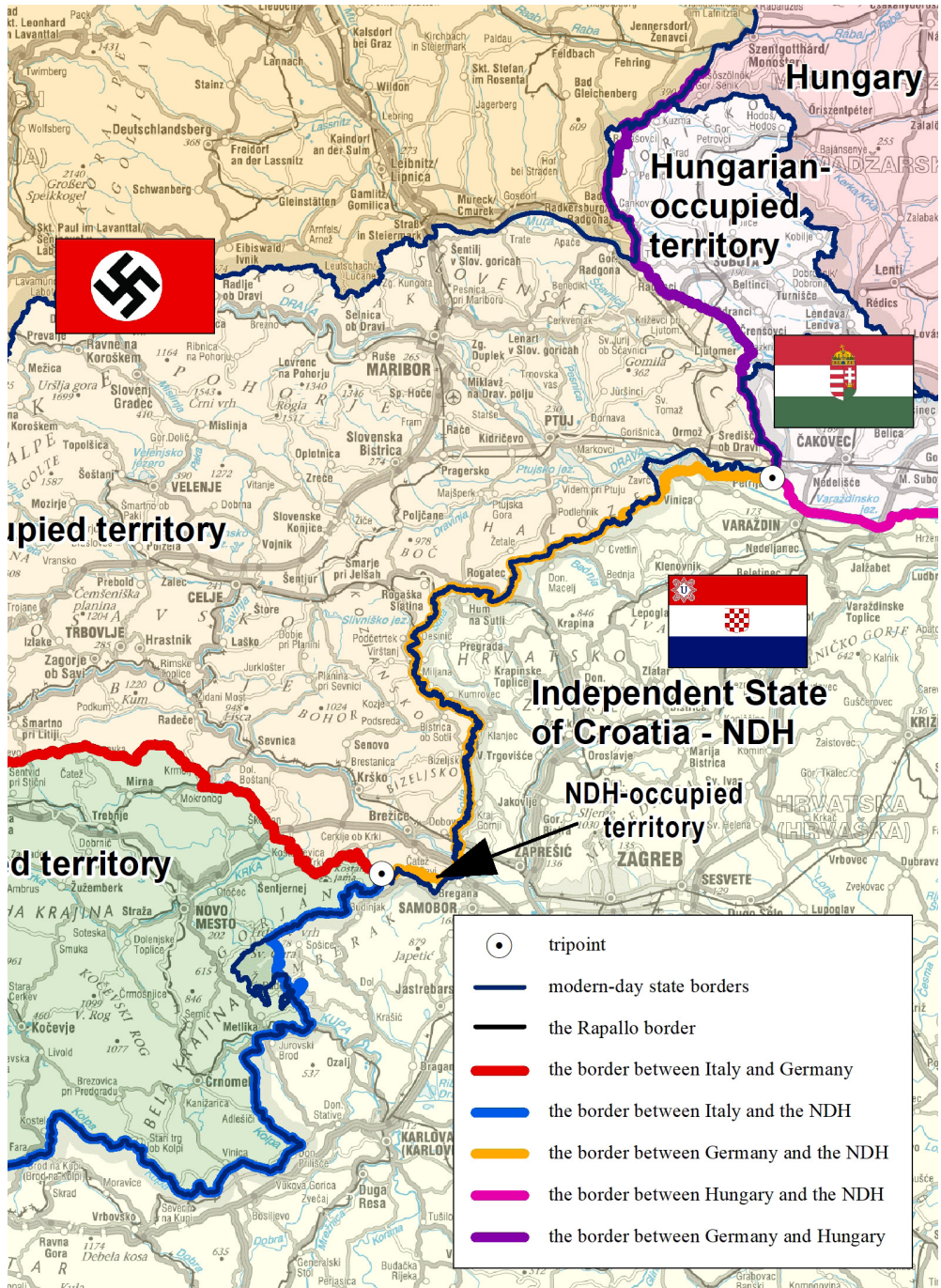


Fig. 23: The partition of the Slovene territory by four occupying states and the exact course of the borders.

Occupation Borders in Slovenia¹⁴³

The nature of borders in Slovene ethnic territory during World War II differed, as did the modes of their identification on location. What they have in common is the sequence of events. At first, a general course of the borders was outlined by politicians. The military occupation took place at the same time or soon after that, as did the provisional demarcation of the border. At this stage, the occupying forces often quarrelled about specific, short sections of the border. Following the end of the most acute stage of the occupation, a more detailed delimitation followed that also included the operation of delimitation commissions in areas where these existed. Finally, the border area was more or less cleared and physically protected by soldiers, which was done most consistently by the Germans.

Kurt von Kamphoevener (17 July 1887, Istanbul – 11 February 1983, Garmisch-Partenkirchen), a lower-ranking diplomat appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ribbentrop as his plenipotentiary, was the main German negotiator. As regards his position, Kamphoevener does not appear to have played an important role; however, as regards his power, his role was quite considerable. Being the leader of the German delegation for border-related questions in the years 1941–1943, he dealt with the border questions with Italy, Hungary, Slovakia, the NDH and was active elsewhere in the Balkans as well. He had offices in Bled, Ljubljana, and Rogaška Slatina in this period. Formally, he was subordinated to the relevant German diplomatic representations; however, in reality he reported directly to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ribbentrop. His father was Louis von Kamphövener, a German officer and Ottoman marshal. He studied law at Oxford, Heidelberg and Göttingen, and worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1911 onwards, being stationed in Madrid (1911–1913), Sydney (1913–14), Sofia (1916–18), London (1920–23), Liverpool (1923–26), and again Madrid (1926–31). He became a member of the Social Democratic Party in 1930 and of the Nazi Party in 1940 (he was probably pressured into joining). He helmed the *Volksdeutsche* Resettlement Commission in 1939, when *Volksdeutsche* were resettled from Polish territories that were obtained by the Soviet Union. Following the occupation and partition of Slovenia, he was a German representative with the High Commissioner of the Province of Ljubljana from mid-October to mid-November 1941. He was involved

143 The description of borders is adapted from the central exhibition *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja* (Border Stones, Barbed Wire, Watchtowers and Minefields) that was produced by the research group in December 2018 and displayed at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Additionally, it was adapted from the following regional exhibitions: *Rogaška Slatina kot obmejno mesto nemškega rajha* (Rogaška Slatina as a Border Town in the German Reich), *Idrija in Žiri kot obmejno območje, 1941–1945* (Idrija and Žiri as a Border Area), *Vinceremo, videt ćemo* (Vinceremo, We Shall See) in Bela Krajina, *En krompir, tri države* (One Potato, Three States) in Dolenjska, as well as *Okupirana Ljubljana: mesto ob meji* (Occupied Ljubljana: A City along the Border). Materials displayed in the exhibitions throughout Slovenia are available online: <https://www.okupacij-skemeje.si> (accessed: in February 2020) in <https://www.facebook.com/OkupacijasMeje/> (accessed in February 2020).

in the resettlement of the Gottschee Germans.¹⁴⁴ During the war, he was a communication officer of the German military-intelligence service (Abwehr) in Russia, Athens, Vrnjačka Banja, and Zagreb. In August 1945, Lieutenant Colonel O.J. Hale, a US interrogator, described him as being “highly cultivated and critical of Nazis”.¹⁴⁵ He was a US prisoner of war in the years 1945–1946; however, he began teaching foreign languages in Hamburg as early as 1946. He returned to the diplomatic service in 1950, and worked as a general consul in Istanbul up to his retirement in 1952.¹⁴⁶

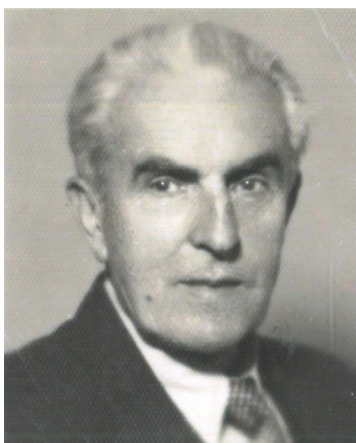


Fig. 24: Kurt Kamphoevener

144 PA AA, Italien. Die Umsiedlung der Deutschen aus der Provinz Laibach. Tätigkeit der Umsiedlungskommission. Pol. XII/8 vom 1941 bis 1942. R 105128.

145 <https://www.ifz-muenchen.de/archiv/zs/zs-2066.pdf>

146 His biography was adapted from: Keipert (ed.), *Biographisches Handbuch*, s. v. Kamphoevener, Kurt von.

Diplomatic Decisions about the Borders

Tone Ferenc maintained that Hitler's plan for the partition of Yugoslavia was in large part devised as early as on 27 March 1941.¹⁴⁷ Branko Petranović argued that it was first made public on 6 April 1941 and was part of the *Generalplan*, the master plan for the administrative organization of German authority in the territory of Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁸ The actual partition was carried out in line with the *Directive on the Partition of Yugoslavia* that had been written on 12 April 1941 in Mönichkirchen near Wiener Neustadt. These guidelines were written by Wilhelm von Keitel,¹⁴⁹ and Germany's allies did not have much say in the partition. Hitler defined the territories that were subject to the annexation; these areas had formerly been parts of Styria and Carinthia, but also of Upper Carniola or modern-day Gorenjska. Hungary obtained the territories of Prekmurje, Međimurje, Baranja, and Bačka. As long as Hitler was unable to return Bessarabia to Romania, he did not want to give Baranja to Hungary, carefully retaining the copper mine in Bor for Germany. He integrated it into Serbia's central part, where Germany introduced the military administration. Between August 1941 and October 1944 this area was governed by General Milan Nedić's collaborationist Government of National Salvation. Parts thereof that presently encompass North Macedonia and areas of southern Serbia were obtained by Bulgaria. Following intense talks with Italy, which had great territorial demands, including the annexation of all of Croatia, Hitler decided to recognise the NDH, which was led by Ante Pavelić. Consequently, Mussolini had to make do with Dolenjska and Bela Krajina, or the so-called Province of Ljubljana (Provincia di Lubiana), Dalmatia, parts of Bosnia, and Montenegro.¹⁵⁰

147 Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizam*, 72, 333.

148 Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, 26.

149 Ferenc wrote several times in his book that these were Hitler's guidelines. However, Van Creveld and Petranović maintain that they were drawn up by Keitel. Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizam*, 15; Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*, 49–78. See also: Ferenc, *Nacistična raznarodovalna politika*, 142; Van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy*, 165; Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, 25; Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*, 49–78.

150 Van Creveld, *Hitler's Strategy*, 165.

The Border between Germany and Italy

The partition that divided the territory in question between Germany and Italy was confirmed in Vienna on 21 and 22 April 1941 at the meeting of Ribbentrop and Count Ciano. The latter sought to negotiate larger territorial gains or at least greater Italian political influence in occupied territories; however, Germany was not prepared to give up its leading position in Yugoslavia.¹⁵¹ Ciano was disappointed: “Ribbentrop pointed out clearly on several occasions that this had to be regarded as the definite border because it had been defined by Hitler and that this could not be contradicted.”¹⁵² As evident from Ciano’s diary, the Italians did not trust the Germans, but being the weaker ally they had to adapt. This did not impact only the German-Italian border, which was shifted much more westwards and southwards than expected, but also the status of the Province of Ljubljana. Originally, Mussolini promised to take into consideration the wish and the proposal put forward by the Slovene bourgeois collaborationist parties that the Province of Ljubljana would obtain autonomy in the same manner that the Germans had done in the case of Slovakia.¹⁵³ However, in fear of Germany taking away what was already given, he quickly integrated the Province of Ljubljana into the Kingdom of Italy.

The issue of the province’s lacking in Italianization was then solved by preserving the Rapallo border and granting this province a special statute, bilingualism and exempting men from military service. Italy’s fear of Hitler changing his mind was indicated in its attitude towards the Ustashe-led NDH and the protectorate over it. The final border agreement was drawn up on 26 May 1941. It was initialled on behalf of both countries’ leaders by the German Secretary of State with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ernst von Weizsäcker and the plenipotentiary Italian ambassador in Berlin Dino Alfieri on 8 July, when it became effective. Both parties agreed that the agreement exchange ceremony would be held in Rome.¹⁵⁴

151 Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*, 26.

152 Ciano, Galeazzo. *Tajni arhivi grofa Ciana 1936–1942*. Zagreb: Zora, 1952, 459–462.

153 Ferenc, *Fašisti brez krinke*, 109–115.

154 PA AA. Italien. Die deutsch-italienische Grenze im ehemals jugoslawischen Gebiet. Pol. XII/6 vom 1941 bis 1942. R 105126. Berlin, den 26. 5. 1941. Deutsch-italienischer Grenzvertrag.

The German troops did not wait for agreements to be concluded to delimit and occupy their territories. They acted swiftly after each of Hitler's decisions, particularly in terms of Italy. The High Command of the *Wehrmacht* (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht – OKW) sent a telegram to the German general with the Italian High Command on 23 April, a mere two days after the meeting, which read:

“The Reich's new border in Carinthia and Carniola, to which Duce agreed about four days ago, is as follows:

- the former Italian–Yugoslav border from Tarvisio as far as the settlement of Žiri–Vič–Ljubljana (excluded)–Cerklje–Brežice (both included).*
- From there it runs along the former southern border of Styria as far as Radkersburg.*

*The German troops will presumably begin to march into these territories on 24 April. It must be ensured that the Italian troops will have vacated the area by then.”*¹⁵⁵

The Italians were particularly unhappy because they obtained Slovenia's least developed parts, and especially disappointed that they did not get the area along the river Sava, with its mines and the Ljubljana–Zidani Most–Zagreb railway. Still, at first they did not give up hope of some changes being made, even though Hitler's decisions were irrevocable.

Until at least the end of April or – with less and less hope – until autumn, the Italians wanted to make the Germans keep their original promises or, at least, change their positions. They put forward as many as thirty proposals regarding changes to the German–Italian border in the middle of the former Drava Banovina.¹⁵⁶ Matters on location were probably made worse by a lack of information and specific Italian commanders' conduct, when they acted on their own account, and perhaps even their anger, even though their zeal was not exactly in proportion to their courage. This is evident from the case of Litija:

“April 1941. – Whose will be Zasavje, will it be German or Italian? On account of Litija and the rest of Zasavje, particularly the region's mines, many conflicts arose between the allied Germans and the Italians. It is for that reason that no occupying authority arrived in our town in the first days. The first Germans were brought to Litija by the engineer Puschmann, who fetched them so that Litija and Zasavje would not come under Italy, as was speculated by many at the time.

155 PA AA. Italien. Die deutsch-italienische Grenze im ehemals jugoslawischen Gebiet. Pol. XII/6 vom 1941 bis 1942. R 105126. Fernschreiben. An den Deutschen General beim ital. Oberkommando, 23. 4. 1941.

156 Ferenc, *Položaj slovenskega naroda*, 183.

The conflicts between the Italians and the Germans did not end there. Hitler and Mussolini were said to have agreed that Italy would obtain Zasavje, along with the mines in Zagorje and Trbovlje, because it was heavily affected by the shortage of fuel.

In mid-April, when the Italians were preparing to occupy Litija, they received a message that Germans were already there. A train with Italian soldiers was at Laze because the Germans did not let them pass through and they had to return to Ljubljana.

On an unspecified day in April 1941 an Italian armoured train rushed from Ljubljana to Zasavje because the Italians demanded all of Zasavje for themselves, claiming that this had been agreed before the attack on Yugoslavia. Naturally, the Germans refused to be chased away, shoved the Italians back onto the armoured train and sent them off to Ljubljana, from where they came.

Of course, Italian diplomacy did not give up and demanded via high-ups that the Germans adhere to the agreement and let the Italians have Litija and the rest of the Zasavje region.

Eventually, the highest German authority seems to have decided to keep to the agreement. Towards the end of April, the Germans in Litija were completely ready to leave the area. They cleaned the entire railway station, taking away even the last wagon, and emptied the storage facilities; in short, they took everything, leaving nothing for their Italian ally.

To this day, workers from the Litija railway station like to recount that the station was never cleaner or emptier than on the day when the Germans left Litija. Just three Germans tasked with handing over Litija to the Italian administration stayed behind. The Germans also vacated all the other railway stations that were in their hands after the occupation, namely Laze, Jevnica, and Kresnice. An armoured train carrying a heavily armed Italian garrison and members of the Italian administrative authorities that would take over Litija and the rest of Zasavje ran from Ljubljana in the direction of Litija the other day. Arriving from Ljubljana, this train stopped at every station, where the occupying troops telephoned the next one and asked if the Germans were still there. With the Germans having left Laze, Jevnica, and Kresnice, their calls were answered by the Slovene railway officials. Having received good news from all three railway stations, the armoured Italian train reached Kresnice without obstacles. The armoured Italian expedition made a stop at Kresnice and the commander of the Italian garrison hurried to the Kresnice railway station office and demanded that a phone call be made to the Litija railway station. The telephone call from the Kresnice to the Litija railway station came through quickly.

*The Italian commander enquired if Germans were still at the Litija station. The railway station officer in Litija gave an affirmative answer, and called the German representative to the telephone to speak to the Italian at Kresnice. The German grabbed the receiver and spoke to the Italian at Kresnice. This must have been too much for the Italian. As soon as he heard that the Germans were in Litija, he let go of the receiver, jumped onto the train and ordered: 'Return home to Ljubljana!' The Italian train that was supposed to occupy Litija set off in the direction of Ljubljana, and the Germans in Litija waited in vain for the new master. It was not until later that this matter was clarified, causing a great deal of laughter on account of the brave Italian army. The Italian army's cowardly escape from Kresnice is the reason why the Germans carried on with their occupation of our valley.'*¹⁵⁷

Naturally, Litija remained in German hands because of Hitler's decision, even though reports appeared among the locals who were expelled to Serbia that Zasavje would be integrated into Italy in September. Italy even produced maps showing Zasavje as being part of its territory. Much like elsewhere, the actual delimitation on location was left to individual commanders and local holders of power; in late April 1941, at Laze near Kresnice, a German non-commissioned officer ordered that a German flag be taken as far as the first Italian guards and driven into the ground there. The municipal servant was tasked with taking a quickly made flag to the location by bike. He did not run into the Italians. Scared and fed up with riding his bicycle, he drove the flag into the ground somewhere near Laze and rode back. The thus defined border then remained in place.

The German commanders refused to leave Novo Mesto and its surroundings and, consequently, the German-Italian border commission had to convene a meeting.¹⁵⁸ This commission dealt mostly with the surroundings of Ljubljana. The Germans outlined the border between Ježica and Šentvid by connecting their territory and, as mentioned previously, built a road and a railway.¹⁵⁹ The German delegation substantiated this by means of a position stated in Hitler's guidelines that "the river Sava with its banks is a border river in its course as far as the Croatian border".¹⁶⁰ In Ljubljana and elsewhere, the width of the right bank was interpreted in a manner that was imposed by military, transport, and economic interests. On the other hand, the Italians insisted on territories across the

157 Župančič, *Zasavje v plamenih*, 49–51.

158 A report written by the Central Border Commission with the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, 19 July 1941, cited after: Milošević, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*, 129.

159 Kurta von Kamphoeven's reports, sketches, and other documents in PA AA. Italien. Die deutsch-italienische Grenze im ehemals jugoslawischen Gebiet. Pol. XII/6 vom 1941 bis 1942. R 105126.

160 A report written by the Central Border Commission with the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, 19 July 1941, cited after: Milošević, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*, 129.

river Sava, maintaining that the area was "Ljubljana's living space".¹⁶¹ Inhabitants of a few settlements in the area wanted to live under German occupation, rather than Italian, and wrote petitions or even held protests over this issue.¹⁶²

The conflict between Italy, the NDH, and Germany, as well as that between Germany and Hungary in the east, regarding how much territory would be appropriated, dragged on until the end of the summer of 1941.

"The Italians had many issues with the demarcation line. Even though it was marked by means of signs and inscriptions, people moved them at night in favour of Germany. Grazioli was also concerned because on 7 May Pavelić demanded that Bela Krajina be annexed by the NDH. He wrote to the Foreign Minister Ciano that this would pose a threat to 'our interests'.

For a while the correction of the demarcation line was also demanded by the OHK [the High Command of the German army, or Oberkommando des Heeres], because it sought to improve the safety of the Sava Valley, the communications between Zidani Most and Brežice, and between Moravče, Bistrica, Škocjan, and Kostanjevica. However, the Italians demanded the territory as far as the road from Cerklje to Brežice, which was ignored by Uiberreither, who outlined the southern border of Lower Styria along the line Moravče–Mirna–Št. Peter pri Novem Mestu—the summit of the Gorjanci hill range. This caused an uproar and notes of protest kept pouring in. The OHK had to act once again and prove to the German Foreign Ministry that the demarcation was necessary for strategic reasons as well. However, the Italians did not give up.

A series of provocations began. The Germans entered the Italian territory and made threats to people who were in favour of Italy; they did not allow them to attend Mass, claiming that the priests supported the Italian authorities. The situation changed in favour of Italy soon after that. Following the first wave of emigration, the Italian intelligence service wrote that, for the most part, people were favourably disposed towards Italy and that only the local German population was against it.

The question of the correction of the demarcation line re-emerged when the delimitation commission began its operation in July 1941 and the Italians began to claim a larger area of Ljubljana's hinterland, namely the area to the north of the city. The commission concluded its operation in mid-August and, consequently, both parties no longer made demands with regard to correcting the demarcation line. The Italians left areas near Lučine in Gorenjska to the Germans, as well as

161 Ibid.

162 Anton Stipanič, *Vinceremo, videt čemo*.

*the right bank of the river Sava between Črnuče and Podgrad, because the Germans had promised to regulate the Sava and move the demarcation line to the middle of the river. The Germans rejected the Italian proposal for the triangle Št. Vid nad Ljubljano–Medno–Sava–Črnuče–Št. Vid nad Ljubljano to become part of Italy, even though they were offered an area of approximately the same size near Sv. Križ pri Kostanjevici. The Germans also refused to leave Sv. Katarina and the area above it to Italy due to considerable military-related concerns.*¹⁶³

Similarly to Mikuž, a few other sources maintain that the Croats had aspirations to obtain as much Slovene territory as possible, not only in relation to Germany in Štajerska, where the case of Hum was described on the level of diplomacy (they also quietly obtained territory in Haloze and other areas where that was possible), but also in relation to Italy. Their primary interest lay in Dolenjska (the territory as far as Novo Mesto and in the direction of Brežice) and in Bela Krajina. On 25 April 1941 Slavica Moškon from Novo Mesto wrote the following in her diary:

“At about 8 o’clock in the morning I see from my window a few cars stopping in front of the town hall. A number of armed men step out of the cars, I learn that they are Croats and want to claim Novo Mesto. They drove off, continuing in the direction of Ljubljana and returned to the town hall at about 7. It is believed that we shall hear tomorrow what they learned. The Croats thus left without success.”

The Ustashe delegation and their leader making a stop in Novo Mesto while driving to Ljubljana was also mentioned in other sources.

The border between Germany and Italy can be divided in two short branches. To the south-east of the Province of Ljubljana the border ran from Ljubljana’s eastern suburbs, to the north of Stična, Šentrupert and Krmelj, past Bučka, which was located on the German side, towards Zameško, where it reached the river Krka. From there it continued along the river, past Kostanjevica, which was located on the Italian side, in the direction of Bušča Vas. In front of Bušča Vas the border crossed the river Krka and reached the tripoint of Germany, the Province of Ljubljana, and the NDH in the proximity of Gadova Peč. A large boundary stone that had once marked the border between the Austrian and Hungarian parts of the Habsburg monarchy was turned into a tripoint boundary marker.¹⁶⁴ A section of the border continued towards Štajerska as a border between Germany and the NDH as far as the next tripoint, namely

163 Metod Mikuž: *Zgodovina slovenskega osvobodilnega boja*, Redna knjiga Prešernove družbe, 1970, pp. 40–41.

164 The research group identified it on the basis of data from historical maps that was transferred to the GPS system by the GIAM (Dr Rok Ciglič). In the future, this border marker will be turned into a memorial.

that of the NDH, Germany and Hungary. In this section the delimitation generally corresponded to the border between the Hungarian and Austrian parts of the former monarchy. The other section of the border, running from the tripoint boundary marker towards the Gorjanci hill range, became the border between Italy and the NDH. It ran across Kolpa as far as Osilnica, continuing to the west of Delnice as far as the Bay of Bakar. In this branch, the border with Italy was a strategic and partly economic frontier. The river Sava lent itself to being a natural border; however, the Germans sought to control the area on the southern bank of the river as well. This was particularly significant due to the defence of an area that was economically very important to them. The border ran along a hilly terrain, which enabled the Germans to control the area, and thus the Italian border territory.

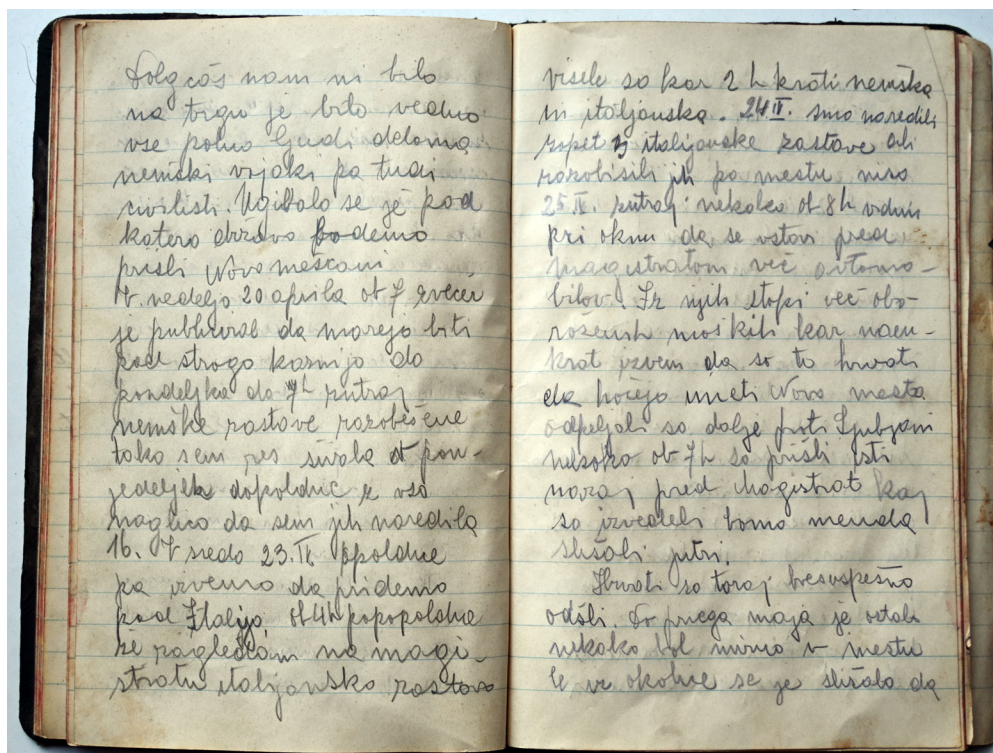


Fig. 25: The page from Slavica Moškon's diary containing her entry that mentioned the arrival of the Croatian delegation in Novo Mesto.



Fig. 26: The Italian-German border crossing on modern-day Podgorska cesta in Ljubljana, immediately next to the intersection with Cesta Andreja Bitenca, along which ran the occupation border. This is a view of Ljubljana backdropped by fields and meadows, presently mostly covered with blocks of flats. Another border crossing was located nearby, near the intersection of Cesta Andreja Bitenca and Celovška cesta. The photograph was taken in secret by Tine Bitenc and is kept by Milena Zalokar.

The second branch of the German-Italian border ran to the north and west of Ljubljana via the Polhov Gradec dolomites as far as the former Rapallo border between Žiri and Idrija, reaching the latter near Spodnji Vrsnik. The Rapallo border ran from Peč above Rateče¹⁶⁵ and ran across the summits of Jalovec, Triglav, Možic, Porezen, Blegoš, Črni Vrh nad Cerknim, Bevkov Vrh, Hotedršica, Planina, Javornik, Biška Gora, Griž, Snežnik, Kastav and to the east of Matulji towards the sea.¹⁶⁶ The role of the Rapallo border changed with the occupation. Between Peč and the settlement of Spodnji Vrsnik the former border between Italy and Yugoslavia became the border between Italy and the German Reich. The new border, coming from the direction of Ljubljana, joined it in the proximity of Spodnji Vrsnik.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ The modern-day tripoint of Austria, Italy, and Slovenia is located in the same spot on Peč above Rateče.

¹⁶⁶ Ajlec, Zorn & Mikša, *Zapadna jugoslavenska granica*.

¹⁶⁷ Bojan Balkovec, *Y tromejnik*.



Fig. 27: The former Rapallo border (Yugoslav-Italian border, at this point the German-Italian border) and the newly defined German-Italian border that ran from Ljubljana joined at Spodnji Vrsnik, near the boundary marker no. 40.

The section of the Rapallo border that no longer demarcated Italy and Yugoslavia¹⁶⁸ became Italy's "internal" border, which was still subject to control. In practice this meant the border was subject to police and customs control and taxes, which put Slovenes in the Province of Ljubljana in a specific position. Travelling from the Province of Ljubljana to Italy was possible for passport holders; however, not everybody was entitled to a passport. Tax and customs laws from the former state were still in force in all the former Yugoslav provinces that were integrated into Italy.¹⁶⁹ Consequently, passports were required to travel from the Province of Ljubljana to Italy's interior. Standing near Spodnji Vrsnik, boundary marker no. 40 became a tripoint boundary marker, identifying the border of Germany, Italy, and the Province of Ljubljana.

¹⁶⁸ The section between Spodnji Vrsnik as far as the territory to the east of Snežnik via Hotedršica.

¹⁶⁹ Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 251.



Fig. 28: Sector boundary marker no. 12 of the Rapallo border on Prehodavci in the Julian Alps marked the border between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which remained in use during World War II, delineating the border between Italy and Germany. Sector markers were 1 metre tall and 40 cm wide. The letter D stood for Germany (*Deutschland*). The inscription 1920 signifies the year when the Treaty of Rapallo was signed.



Fig. 29: A boundary marker standing on Šitna Glava, in the immediate proximity of Mala Mojstrovka, at an altitude of 2,078 m.



Fig. 30: Dr Peter Mikša and barbed wire in the Alps. Germany used barbed wire to protect even the highest, narrow mountain passes that are accessible only to well-versed mountaineers. In some places this barbed wire, along with pegs to which it was attached, is still preserved.



Fig. 31: Dr Matija Zorn, Dr Peter Mikša, Dr Božo Repe, Dr Bojan Balkovec exploring the border on Šitna Glava on 1 August 2019.

The northern section of the former Rapallo border, which became the border between Germany and Italy, saw considerable changes. It ran in high mountains and became a peculiarity due to the symbolic marking of territory. Geographically, the border ran along the divide between the Adriatic and the Black Sea watersheds.¹⁷⁰ To outline its course, the decision-makers made use of the existing boundary markers and changed the inscriptions on them.¹⁷¹ The Germans, who “lost” Triglav after World War I, appropriated it once again – also symbolically because it was soon depicted on postage stamps. In keeping with the motto “No borders on this summit ever again!”, the boundary marker on the summit of Triglav was removed and a Slovene flag was hung by partisans in August 1944. Mountain huts that stood on the German side of the border and were in the interwar period managed by the Slovene Mountaineering Society were at that point in the hands of the German Mountaineering Society. A few huts still operated in the summer of 1941, but were mostly abandoned later on. Many mountain huts were destroyed because they could be used as a shelter by partisans or refugees. The German customs police (*Zoll-Polizei*) was stationed in the hut Aljažev Dom in the Vrata Valley in the autumn of 1941, which was at the time had been renamed Kugy-Haus.

The borders in Slovene mountains had been used to mark the national space back in the period of Austria-Hungary, and the occupying forces sought to cement them for “a thousand years”. Well, in Slovenia, the German Reich was rather short-lived, it lasted a mere four years. Following the defeat of Nazi Germany, boundary markers were removed from high mountains and the few that remain are now weather-beaten. Dr Peter Mikša argues that Aljaž Tower on the summit of Triglav was particularly symbolic in nature. In 1944, during the war, three partisan patrols reached the summit of Triglav, namely a patrol of the Gradnik Brigade in late May, a group of cultural workers of the 9th Corps on 2 August, and a patrol of the Jesenice–Bohinj Detachment in the second half of October that honoured the liberation of Belgrade by hanging a flag there. This turret has been repainted many times over the years. It was grey in 1895. In the interwar period, when the Yugoslav–Italian border ran across the summit of Triglav, the Italians and the Yugoslavs waged a “painting war”, as the turret was repainted by both. The late 1950s saw it being repainted red and a five-pointed star was added. Due to the production of a film about the climber and author Julius Kugy, the tower was then repainted in its original grey, the five-pointed star was removed and replaced by the original small flag. This colour remained in place after the filming had been completed.

The border was additionally secured by the Germans. This is described in detail in an extensive and very thorough report for Gorenjska.¹⁷² This was the result of Hitler’s

170 Matija Zorn, Peter Mikša, *Kje smo in kje so mejni kamni*.

171 The J that stood for the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was replaced with D for Germany (*Deutschland*).

172 SI AS 1626, box No. 1. Poročilo o izpeljavi izpraznitve mejnega pasu na Gorenjskem, Bled, 13. 6. 1942. This report includes extensive lists of people that were affected by German measures.

order about the implementation of security measures on the German-Italian border. Erwin Rösener, the highest-ranking SS officer and lieutenant general of the police, was responsible for the execution of this order in Slovenia.



Fig. 32: Aljaž Tower painted red.



Fig. 33: A boundary marker on the summit of Triglav.

By fortifying the border, they sought to “limit the border traffic to specific border crossings and ban crossing the border elsewhere” as well as to “ensure the optimal control of the border by using minimum power and prevent people from crossing the border illegally”. The following measures were implemented to achieve these goals:

- clearing the strip of land along the border, including the resettlement of the population and demolition of houses and other buildings in a width that allowed for effective control;
- deforesting wooded areas, clearing overgrown surfaces and shrubbery in the border area;
- installing wire obstacles along the border and other structures for its fortification, implementing “additional security measures in specific spots”, which implied minefields, bunkers, and watchtowers.

In Gorenjska, the selection and resettlement of the population in the border area, along with other border-related measures, was carried out by the Bled office of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood. *SS-Standartenführer* Alois Maier-Kaibitsch helmed the Bled office and the complete operation was carried out by Konrad Nimpfer, who wrote the report.¹⁷³ High mountains were not easily traversable due to the relief, they were unpopulated and trails were scarce; consequently, the border was heavily guarded mostly on passes and saddles, across which ran trails and roads, such as the Vršič Pass. Nowadays, few remnants of that section of the border which ran in high mountains are identifiable. It can be gathered from second-hand accounts that, being a symbol of the occupation, boundary stones were removed systematically after the war and many of them were destroyed due to the harsh climate. However, they are preserved in some places, as are the remnants of barbed wire and even wooden poles to which it was attached.¹⁷⁴

By following the principles implemented in Gorenjska, the Germans fortified and secured other sections of the border as well. Barbed wire was installed and mines were planted in the strip of land running along the border. To control the border, they cleared large forested areas, demolished a few residential and auxiliary buildings, and built watchtowers in prominent spots. These were about 30 metres high and strategically placed to control the area between two watchtowers. Additionally, both the German and Italian occupiers had troops stationed in the area to patrol the border on a regular basis. These measures rendered the border difficult to cross, and thus legitimate border crossings were few and far between. Since it was now extremely difficult to cross the border to do necessary chores, run errands or work the fields and meadows, the locals

173 See Appendix 1 for the complete report about clearing the border area in Gorenjska.

174 Repe, *Diplomatsko razkosanje Slovenije*, 162–164; Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 20–24.

were often subject to the whims of the guards and border authorities that, for the most part, imposed strict control. Consequently, the border was frequently crossed illegally despite the great risks, including that of being killed by a mine.

Following Italy's capitulation in September 1943 and with Germany taking over the control of the Italian-occupied territory, this border was rendered irrelevant because the Province of Ljubljana, along with the neighbouring Italian provinces, became part of the so-called Operational Zone Adriatic Coastline, which was headquartered in Trieste. In part, the German army removed mines that had been placed along traffic routes and in meadows, in some areas even barbed wire, and used them elsewhere. Some sections of the border were still protected to prevent the passage or operation of partisan troops. However, it was only after the end of the war that this border area was properly cleared out. Formally, the border continued to exist because the-so called Republic of Salò, which was led by Mussolini, came into being in Italy's north, and the Province of Ljubljana continued to be part of it formally, albeit without any Italian presence.

The Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral

The question of what would happen to the German-Italian border was raised after Italy's capitulation. The German political and military leadership realized in the spring of 1943 that Italy would be faced with great political and military changes, and was most probably heading for a military collapse. As always, Germany made preparations to take over authority beforehand. According to the basic plan, the German troops would occupy not only the Italian-occupied territories but all of Italy. However, more detailed plans about the organization were not devised, and would follow developments as they happened.

Following the actual fall of the fascist regime in Italy on 25 July 1943, the German High Command began to implement the preparatory measures. However, with no detailed arrangements having been made, the Slovene territory saw two concepts regarding the structural organization of the Italian territory being developed. The first concept was annexationist and promoted by the *Gauleiter* of Carinthia and that of Tyrol. According to a plan devised by the Carinthian *Gauleiter* Dr Friedrich Rainer, the Canal Valley would be reintegrated into Carinthia and the remaining area be divided into three parts, namely Istria with Trieste, the Gorizian area, and Carniola.¹⁷⁵ Headquartered in Klagenfurt, civil administration would be introduced in all these territories. They sought to organize the self-defence of the population against Bolshevism in the entire area, and ensure the economic exploitation of the population for the sake of the final German victory. In doing so, they would achieve an old German goal, i.e. the annexation of the territory situated between Carinthia and Trieste to Germany, and the Germanization of the population living there.¹⁷⁶

The other concept, which prevailed due to Hitler's insistence, was a political and diplomatic one. Following Italy's capitulation,¹⁷⁷ on 10 September 1943 Hitler established

175 Initially, this implied only Dolenjska and Notranjska, and, at a later point, Gorenjska as well.

176 Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 409–410.

177 The Kingdom of Italy had signed the capitulation on 3 September 1943; however, it was not until 5 days later, on 8 September 1943, that the capitulation was announced publicly.

two operational zones that were occupied by the German troops in the territory of the Republic of Salò: the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral, which encompassed Friuli, Gorizia, Trieste, Istria, Rijeka, the Kvarner Gulf, and Ljubljana, and the Operational Zone of the Alpine Foothills, which consisted of the provinces of Bolzano, Trento, and Belluno. He appointed *Gauleiter* Rainer from Carinthia and Franz Hofer from Tyrol as leaders.

Only top Nazi leaders were made aware of Hitler's decree, because they did not want to give the impression that the authority of the fascist government was being violated. As such, on 9 September, one day after Italy's capitulation, the new Italian fascist government was formed under German auspices in Munich, and on 12 September the German paratroopers rescued Mussolini from confinement in the Gran Sasso, Abruzzo. Mussolini reorganized the government on 23 September, returned to north Italy and established the Italian Socialist Republic or the so-called Republic of Salò, which was named after its capital on Lake Garda.

Both operational zones survived for about 600 days, and their existence was marked by a complicated legal and political situation. As far as the Operational Zone for the Adriatic Littoral was concerned, this complicated position was not related solely to the relations between Germany and the Republic of Salò, but also to the relations between Germany and the NDH, as well as between Germany and other collaborationist authorities. On the one hand, Mussolini and Pavelić sought to gain as much power as possible, as did the collaborationist politicians in the Province of Ljubljana on the other. This resulted in some sort of a diarchy, in places even triarchy, with the Germans having the most say. On 20 September 1943, Rainer appointed Leon Rupnik as head of the provincial administration. Mussolini followed suit a week later, when he appointed Emilio Grazioli as High Commissioner, who came to Ljubljana.¹⁷⁸ His return evoked great fear and agitation among the Slovene politicians, who went so far as to say that they would refuse to collaborate if he returned. Having been put under pressure, the Germans achieved Grazioli's swift withdrawal from Ljubljana despite the protest of the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Salò. Regardless of its weakness, the Germans needed Rupnik's collaborationist government more than they needed the previously defeated Italians, even though they continued to recognize their authority over the Province of Ljubljana. Rainer saw this step merely as a means to an end, however, and through the German operational zone he would take over territory extending as far as the Adriatic. Still, Slovene politicians in Ljubljana hoped to achieve "autonomous" Slovenia under some sort of a protectorate. They believed that the unification of Gorenjska and of the Province of Ljubljana would open the path to *an autonomous Carniolan*

178 Grazioli had held the post of the high commissioner between May 1941 and June 1943. Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 403.

province that would, along with a few other Slovene territories, form *a Slovene province* after the war.¹⁷⁹

The collision of two concepts, the annexationist and the diplomatic, impacted the question of the borders as well. In relation to the Republic of Salò, both *Gauleiters* wanted to convert the border of operational zones into a real border. Border guards and customs would be introduced in the first stage, and the border would be protected and patrolled at all times. This would be followed by an economic blockade, the administrative adjustment to Germany and the introduction of the German currency. Although both *Gauleiters* were under Hitler's direct authority and thus possessed great power, they did not succeed in their plans. The German Foreign Ministry opposed them, believing that Mussolini's fascist government, which was dissatisfied with the introduction of the operational zones, would regard this as a new step towards German annexation, which would result in a conflict that Germany could not afford at the time. It was weakened militarily and barely controlled the main communication channels and cities upon the establishment of the operational zones due to the Slovene or Yugoslav and Italian resistance movements. With the end of the war approaching, Germany's security-related deficiencies increased, despite having introduced even more repressive measures. If Germany had won the war, which was more or less impossible after Italy's capitulation and Allied victories in battlefields across the world, the annexationist policy would have been implemented. As it was, however, the border in this space became subject to conflicts between Yugoslavia and the Allies, and between Yugoslavia and Italy.¹⁸⁰

179 Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 400.

180 This entire chapter was adapted from: Ferenc, *Razkosanje in aneksionizem*, 397–403; Stuhlpfarrer, *Die Operation-zonen Alpenvorland» und »Adriatisches Küstenland »1943–1945«*.

The Border between Germany and the NDH – the Reich’s Southern Border

The border between Germany and the NDH measured approximately 100 kilometres in length, with the majority of the delimitation line running along the river Sotla. By and large, the new border corresponded with the ethnic and the former administrative border that demarcated former state and political formations in the area in question, and the Sotla had marked the national border between Slovenes and Croats for centuries. Along with the German border with Italy, this Lower Styrian border became the southernmost border of the thousand-year Third Reich, and played mostly a protective role.



Fig. 37: The border crossing between Germany and the NDH at Harine Zlake (Podčetrtek).

Before the war, the Ustashe's ambition was to integrate all of Slovenia into Greater Croatia, as reflected in their maps. They envisaged a referendum for the Slovene part of the territory, but the Germany quickly cut their ambitions, limiting the Croatians to a strip of land along the river Bregana.¹⁸¹ Germany and the NDH signed the border agreement on 13 May 1941.¹⁸² As mentioned before, the border ran along the former Austro-Hungarian delimitation between two tripoints, and the conflicts that arose on the location were addressed by an intergovernmental commission. This commission, whose office was in Rogaška Slatina, was tasked with realizing Hitler's directives as consistently as possible and in line with German interests. The Germans made their position known bluntly at the very first meeting, despite the servility of the Croatian party. Kamphoevener had a good overview of Croatian demands and of the Croatian members of the commission, including their private lives.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, to a certain extent the German part of the commission had to pay regard to their subordinated Croatian counterparts, if only for diplomatic reasons.¹⁸⁴ The Croats put great effort into obtaining the municipality of Hum na Sutli. Hum was occupied by Germany, that immediately began to implement the denationalization policy, which indicated that, initially, they intended to keep it. However, the Croatian party put forward an emotional argument that this municipality saw the first public performance of the Croatian national anthem *Lijepa naša* in 1864. Its author, Antun Mihanović, owned a mansion there as well. In return for Hum, the NDH was willing to leave the southern bank of the river Drava near Vinica and the settlement of Sv. Florijan and its surroundings to Germany. Many sketches and various proposals were produced. Owing to the German-owned glassworks, German economic interests strongly opposed this exchange of territories. The glassworks Straža, which also had a coal mine at Lupinjek, a sand pit and a power station, supplied electricity to Rogatec, to the health resort Rogaška Slatina, as well as to the glassworks at Tržišče. It was owned by the Abel brothers, who were *Volksdeutsche*, and Adolf Körbitz was the factory's managing director. The glassworks and its plants provided employment for many local *Volksdeutsche*. Consequently, the local German authorities and Styrian Nazis lobbied for all this to belong to Germany. Mass protests were organized in support of the annexation by the Reich and, in contrast, by the Croatian population and local politicians in support of Hum being part of Croatia.

181 More can be read on the subject in Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*.

182 *Deutschkroatischer Staatsvertrag*, 25. On behalf of the *poglavnik* the contract was signed by the State Secretary with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dr Mladen Lorković and General August Marić; on behalf of the Chancellor of the Reich it was signed by the German ambassador in Zagreb Siegfried Kasche and Privy Councillor Kurt von Kamphoevener.

183 This was evident and taken advantage of when one of the Croatian members of the commission was replaced.

184 Kurta von Kamphoevener's correspondence, documents, sketches and other materials in PA AA, Grenzfestlegung zwischen Deutschland u. Kroatien. Pol XII/11, 1941–1943. Bd. 1. Kroatien. R 105131.

Eventually, the Croats managed to obtain Hum and in mid-June 1941 the transfer of authority took place.¹⁸⁵ German economic interests continued to oppose this move, however, on account of the glassworks, and were particularly angered by the lack of co-operation shown by the Croatian glassmaking industry.¹⁸⁶

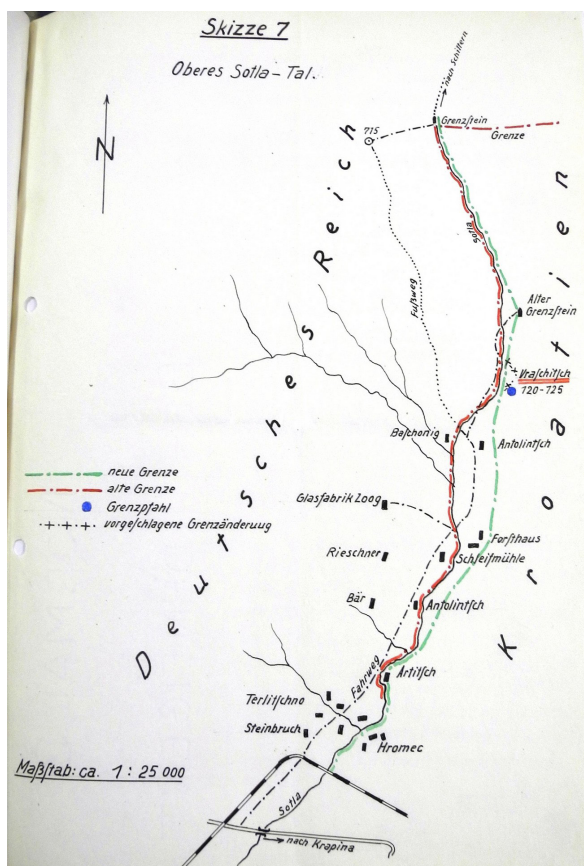


Fig. 38: A sketch showing the proposed delimitation in the proximity of Hum na Sotli.

- 185 1. "The positions are in perfect harmony, the state border must remain as it is, as was defined in the Croatian-German intergovernmental agreement from 13 May 1941. The Municipality of Hum remains unconditionally part of the NDH. Therefore it will not be subject to the Reich's customs regulations. The economic requirements will be regulated by way of a trade agreement or with a special harmonization of the economic relations between Lower Styria and Croatia. The letter written by the helm of the Croatian delegation from Rogaska Slatina on 9 June 1941 has thus lapsed.
2. Diverging from the historical line, the border in the valley of the river Bregana will be shifted to the hillside on the left bank, making the path along the border part of Croatia. The harmonization in the Drava area remains unchanged.
3. Part IV of the paragraph on page 3 of the minutes from the negotiations of the Croatian-German border commission in Rogaska Slatina from 4 to 9 June 1941 is thus settled." Zapisnik LorkovićKasche, p. 95.
- 186 A memorandum of the Croatian Minister of the Economy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the report "Fachgruppe Hohglasindustrie" about the Croatian glassmaking industry, 25 September 1941. Memorandum V.l.d 12/46708/41. In PA AA, Grenzfestlegung zwischen Deutschland u. Kroatien. Pol XII/11, 1941–1943. Bd. 1. Kroatien. R 105131.

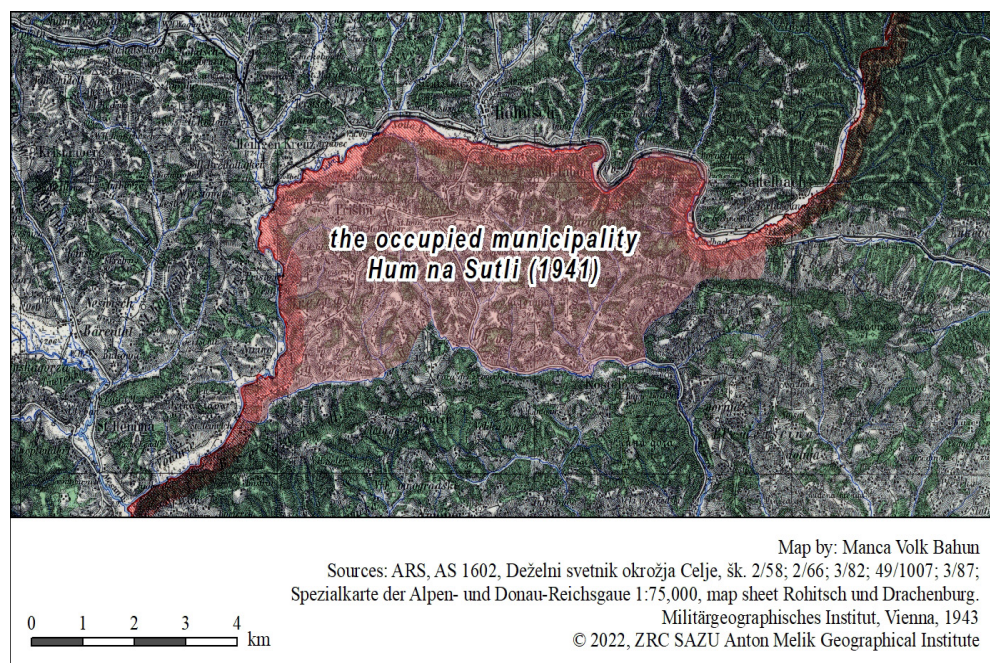


Fig. 39: The occupied municipality of Hum na Sutli (1941)

It is not evident from diplomatic sources why the Germans changed their position on Hum. And despite having obtained the territory, the Croats were not happy with the border at all. *Poglavnik* of the NDH Ante Pavelić ordered that extensive data must be gathered on the matter. At a later point this data was to have been used to correct the border with the Reich in Slovene territory, although this did not take place.

With the border having been defined and based on the principle of the German Reich's defence line, the German administration then performed ethnic cleansing in the strip of land along the border. Slovenes living along the rivers Sotla and Sava were deported and replaced by the resettled Gottschee Germans; the Reich's southern border was fenced off and protected by the army. The initial fortification work had been completed by the late autumn of 1941, barbed wire was installed, guard posts were built and minefields planted. In March 1943, the German administration issued decisions about the urgent construction of watchtowers, some of which were up to 30 metres high. Barbed wire, measuring up to two metres in height, was attached to wooden poles that were driven into the ground at equal intervals a few metres apart. The minefields along the wire were approximately two to four metres wide.

Ministarstvo Pošta Telegrafa i Telefona

TELEGRAM

14

Hum na hribu 2. 8. 1941. 1203 18 15

Putnikom preuzimanja vlast.
zoboljnjem kau se zoshypenja
hrvatskih naro-dnih interese i rese-
tuno se sto kas mozeemo naposl.
svojim ministrom =
U ime stanovnika opetno Hum na

Obrasc T. 205. Š. O.

Ministarstvo Pošta Telegrafa i Telefona

TELEGRAM

15

Iz

Hum na hribu 2. 8. 1941. 1203 18 15

Putnikom preuzimanja vlast.
zoboljnjem kau se zoshypenja
hrvatskih naro-dnih interese i rese-
tuno se sto kas mozeemo naposl.
svojim ministrom =
U ime stanovnika opetno Hum na

Obrasc T. 205. Š. O.

Fig. 40: A telegram sent to Ante Pavelić by the inhabitants of Hum, thanking him for the annexation by Croatia.



Fig. 41: Smuggling goods across the border between Germany and the NDH.

The border could be crossed with a border pass, although such crossings were a difficult and unpleasant undertaking. People living along the border were all of a sudden cut off from their land and sources of income, so they resorted to illegal ways and sophisticated modes of smuggling goods. Tobacco and meat were smuggled from the Croatian riverbank on a fairly regular basis and, in turn, salt, flour, sugar, coffee and even sulphuric acid were sent across the border from Slovenia. Bread, butter, milk and eggs were exchanged between people living on both sides of the border, as were important letters.¹⁸⁷ In October 1944, when the Third Reich was forced to replace its expansionist policy with a defensive one and anticipated the enemy's invasion, the Germans began with extensive defence and fortification work along the entire course of the border. They built trenches, pillboxes and bunkers, whose remnants are clearly noticeable on location to this day. The local population was mobilized to do manual labour in support of these efforts, even in areas 20 km away from the border. Many sections of the defence line were never used in military conflicts, which implies that the mines remained unexploded. Mines planted along the river Sotla were thus responsible for many fatal casualties even a decade after the end of the war.¹⁸⁸

187 *Children of the Border* and Branko Mikša.

188 Repe, *Diplomatsko razkosanje Slovenije*, 161.

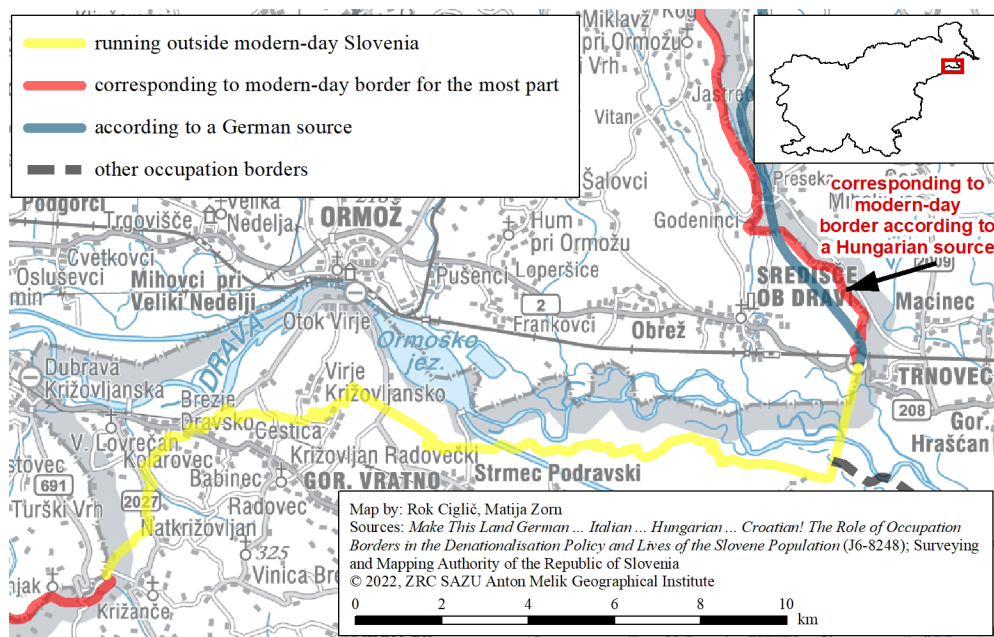


Fig. 42: The course of the border to the south of Ormož, where the border shifted to the right bank of Drava.

The Border between Italy and the NDH

Defining the border between Italy and the NDH in the section that concerned Slovenia was important to both parties, but it was not at the forefront of their respective interests. Much like in relation to Germany, the NDH failed to assert its claims in relation to Italy. The meandering border between Italy and the NDH divided the mainland in the proximity of the Kvarner Gulf in a manner that made Bakar part of Italy and Kraljevica part of the NDH.¹⁸⁹ It ran across hills and valleys to the west of Delnice,¹⁹⁰ but did not ascend as far as the Rapallo border beneath Snežnik. It ran more to the south, to the benefit of Italy, and reached Osilnica. Consequently, Italy obtained the extensive “horn” of the Rapallo border, including Čabar and its surroundings. From Osilnica the border ran along the river Kolpa as far as Božakovo, continuing on the ridge of the Gorjanci hill range/Žumberak as far as Trdinov Vrh, where it followed the former border between the Drava Banovina and the Croatian Sava Banovina in the direction of Gadova Peč. Five Slovene villages beneath Gorjanci, to the north of the river Bregana in the Posavje region, became part of the NDH that integrated them into its administrative system, where they were subject to forced Croatization and resettlement. The clergy were resettled as well, and pastoral care was exercised only occasionally by monks from the Franciscan monastery in Samobor.

Both states saw Dalmatia as a major problem. Following an initial period of indecision, Germany acknowledged Italy's right to the territory and gave Italy, not Hungary, control over the NDH. The main question that arose from this was how this should be regulated.¹⁹¹ Pavelić's promises that he had made to his ally Italy posed a problem, which resulted in lasting conflict with the expectations of the bulk of the members of the Ustashe movement. The negotiations between the NDH and Italy were strenuous, with a significant part thereof taking place in Ljubljana, i.e. between the

189 Deutsche Heereskarte. Nordwestbalkan. Blatt Nr. 38/1. (Rijeka) Fiume. Kept in GIAM ZRC SAZU. See also the map enclosed with the agreement between the NDH and Italy: *Ugovor o određivanju granica*, 49–51.

190 Delnice remained in the NDH.

191 More can be read on the subject in Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*.

Italian Foreign Minister Ciano and Pavelić. Signed on 18 May 1941, the Treaty of Rome included three agreements and defined the relations between the NDH and Italy, as well as the borders between these two states.¹⁹² Originating from a side-branch of the Italian royal family, Prince Aimone of Savoy became the king of the NDH and styled himself Tomislav II, whereby the NDH was in a personal union with the Kingdom of Italy. However, Germany did not leave the NDH completely to Italy, and the two nations shared control over its territory in line with their economic and geo-political interests. The Italian-controlled territory was divided into three zones, with each zone allowing a different degree of autonomy of the NDH.

The border between the NDH and Italy had a significant impact on the Slovene-Croatian relations, which were – much like in the past – contradictory during the war. The Ustashe troops crossed the border frequently and inflicted violence on the Slovene population in the Province of Ljubljana. However, the Slovene Catholic camp continued to follow its policy of affiliating with the NDH.

In October 1943, following an alleged German initiative and in anticipation of the end of the war, Pavelić put forward a proposal according to which the Slovenes and Croats would be joined in a confederation, with each state having its own parliament, as well as a joint parliament and shared foreign affairs and army.¹⁹³ The project about the confederation of the Slovene territory and the NDH, entitled *Basic Principles for the State Union between the Independent State of Croatia and Slovenia*, was conceived in Catholic circles in 1944, and came to no particular result.¹⁹⁴ By contrast, the collaboration of the Slovene and Croatian partisan movements was fruitful at all times, their operations were coordinated and carried out together on many occasions, both on the Slovene and Croatian territory. The partisans did not acknowledge the border between Italy and the NDH.¹⁹⁵

To prevent the Slovene and Croatian partisans from crossing the border, the Italians intended to fortify it in the Gorjanci hill range/Žumberak with a corridor of barbed wire and bunkers. No barbed wire would be installed upstream of the river Kolpa, only fortified bridges and other structures. However, just mere six bunkers were built near Metlika in the spring of 1943 due to Italy's capitulation. The border had a significant impact on the lives of the local population, affecting mostly farmers who owned land on both sides of it. In their eyewitness testimonies, the natives of Žumberak who are of Orthodox origin were of the opinion that the border actually proved useful, as it prevented the Ustashe from coming to the Italian-occupied territory. These people were saved by the fact that the former Yugoslav and Austro-Hungarian internal borders had been taken into consideration when defining the border between Italy and the NDH.¹⁹⁶

192 *Ugovor o određivanju granica*, 49–51, including the map. Signed in Rome on 18 May 1941 in two originals.

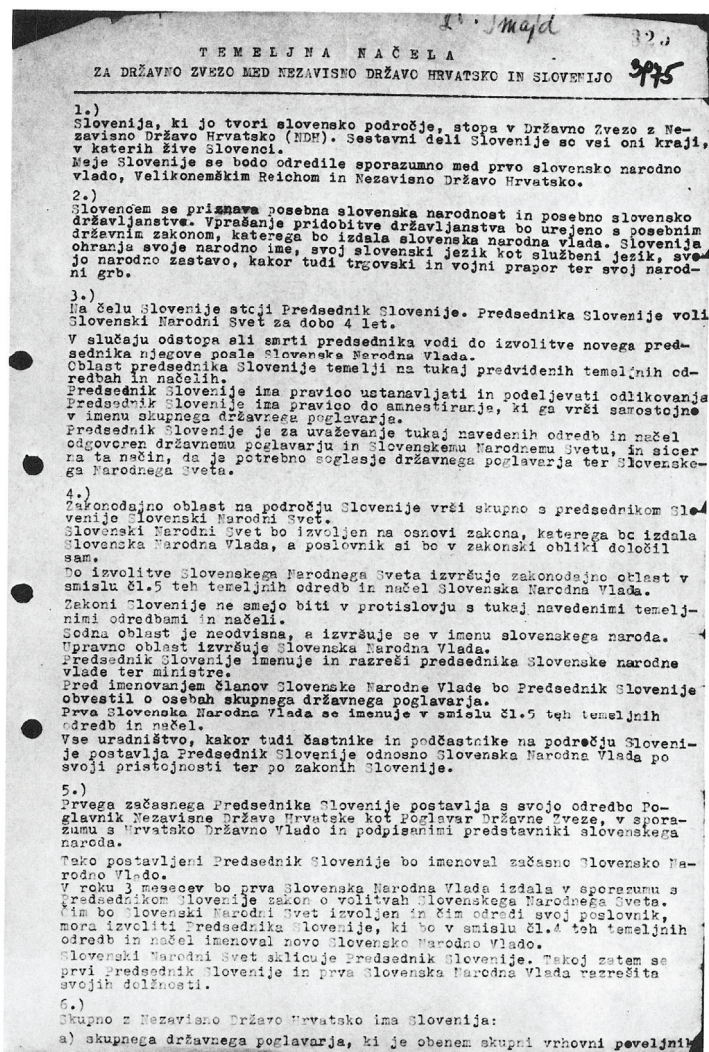
193 Vodušek Starič, "Dosej" Mačkovšek, 81–82.

194 Repe, *Mimo odprtih vrat*, 153–155.

195 Ibid..

196 Janko Goleš, *Meja nam je koristila*.

Along with other problems, the local population saw refugees fleeing from the NDH, particularly the Jewish population.¹⁹⁷ Some of the population was not happy living under Italy, however, and a few attempts were made to integrate a part of the Črnomelj srez (Bela Krajina) into the NDH, i.e. the Municipality of Radatovići, in May 1941,¹⁹⁸ as well as an attempt to integrate all of Bela Krajina into Nazi Germany.¹⁹⁹



197 Jožef Klepec, *Žide so okradli na Kolpi*.

198 SI AS 1790, box No. 5, mapa 2. Kotarska oblast u Jastrebarskom, Broj: 623, Pov.-1941. Jastrebarsko, dne 26. travnja 1941. Predmet: Radatovići općine pripojenje kotaru Jastrebarskom.

199 SI AS 1790, box No., folder 4, Žandarmerijska stanica Dol. Suhor, Br. 79, 12. 5. 1941, Prijava sreskemu načelstvu Črnomelj.

vseh oboroženih sil,
 b) skupno upravo zunanjih zadev in
 c) enoten carinski, valutni, prometni, pomorski in poštni delokrog.
 Monopolci - isti kakor na področju Nezavisne Države Hrvatske - spadajo v delokrog Slovenije.

7.)

Pred sklepanjem mednarodnih pogodb, ki bi bile obvezne ne samo za Nezavisno Državo Hrvatsko temveč tudi za Slovenijo, bo obvestil o tem stalni pooblaščenec vlade Nezavisne Države Hrvatske, odrejen v čl. 10, Predsednika Slovenije ter izposloval njegov pristanek.

8.)

Vojni obvezniki s področja Slovenije služijo na področju Slovenije; uporabljeni so lahko izključno samo za vzdrževanje notranjega reda in miru ter za obrambo lastne zemlje; stoje pod poveljstvom lastnega Glavnega stana in svojih častnikov. Glavni stan (generalštab) oboroženih sil Slovenije stoji pod vrhovnim poveljstvom državnega poveljarja.

9.)

Za skupne zadeve bo imela Slovenija v Ministrstvu oboroženih sil, Ministrstvu državne Riznice (Finančnem min.) ter v glavnih revnateljstvih za promet in pošto po enega svojega načelnika radi odvijanja onih zadev, ki se v dotični upravni panogi nanašajo na Slovenijo. V ministrstvu zunanjih zadev bo imenovanih na vse položaje toliko slovenskih državljanov, kolikor to odgovarja razmerju prebivalstva.

10.)

Razpravam o skupnih zadevah bo na sejah Hrvatske Državne Vlade prisostvoval stalni pooblaščenec Slovenske Narodne Vlade, katerega sedež je v Zagrebu; a razpravam o skupnih zadevah na sejah Slovenske Narodne Vlade bo prisostvoval stalni pooblaščenec Hrvatske Narodne Vlade s sedežem v rezidenici Slovenske Narodne Vlade.

Naloga teh pooblaščenec je ustvariti skladnost v delu in postopku v skupnih zadevah, kakor tudi v onih zadevah, ki morajo le posredno zadevajo interese oz. koristi Nezavisne Države Hrvatske oz. interese ali koristi Slovenije. Posebno skrb bodo ti opolnomočenci položili na to, da se celo kupne, privatno in kazenske pravo, kakor tudi postopki izenačijo. Navedeni opolnomočenci bodo imeli položaj opolnomočenih ministrov in izrednih poslanikov.

Vsaka vlada bo nosila stroške za opolnomočenca in njegov urad.

11.)

Vse oblasti na področju Nezavisne Države Hrvatske in oblasti na področju Slovenije so dolžne nuditi si medsebojno pravno pomoč.

12.)

Z vsemi javnimi finančnimi dohodki od posrednih do neposrednih davkov ter z vsemi drugimi dohodki, zbranimi na področju Slovenije iz katerikoli drugih javnih virov, razpolaga Slovenska Narodna Vlada s svojim lastnim proračunom.

Pri skupnih dohodkih in izdatkih za skupni promet, pomorski promet, skupno pošto, telegrafsko in telefonsko službo ter za carinski delokrog, pa bosta sodelovali Nezavisna Država Hrvatska in Slovenija po kvotah, ki odgovarjajo številu prebivalstva. Pri ugotavljanju števila prebivalstva bo vzeto v obzir stanje po zadnjem službenem ljudskem štetju.

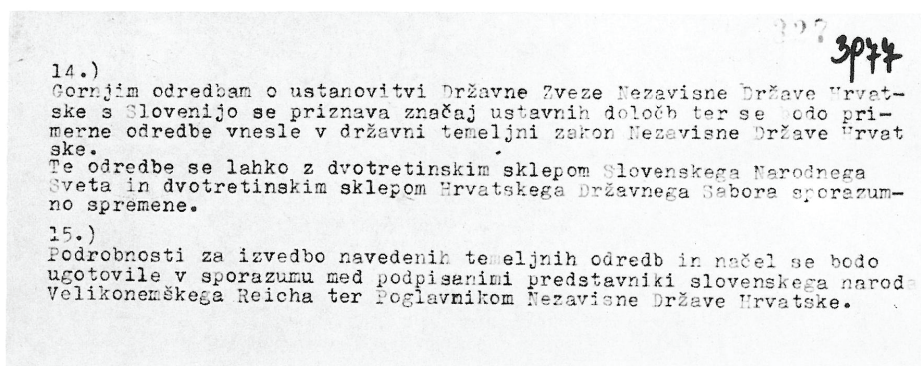
Izdatke za državno poveljarstvo ter za Ministrstvo zunanjih zadev nosita Nezavisna Država Hrvatska in Slovenija po kvotah, izračunanih na zgoraj omenjeni način.

Plače slovenskih načelnikov predvidenih v čl. 9 bodo na proračunu Slovenske Narodne Vlade.

13.)

Iz tako stvorjene Državne Zveze Slovenije in Nezavisne Države Hrvatske lahko Slovenija vsak čas radi ustanovitve državne samostojnosti izstopi; za to odločitev morata v tem pravcu glasovati dve tretini Slovenskega Narodnega Svetov soglasju s Predsednikom Slovenije.

Za izstop Slovenije iz Državne zvezve gornjo svrhu ni potreben pristanek kake druge instance. Ravnotako lahko Hrvatski Državni Sabor z dvotretinsko večino ter soglasjem svojega državnega poveljarja prekine Državno zvezo s Slovenijo.



Figs. 43, 44, and 45: Basic Principles for the State Union between the Independent State of Croatia and Slovenia.



Fig. 46: In the proximity of Metlika, the Italian army converted a house near the bridge across the river Kolpa into a bunker, November 1942.

The Germans expelled more than 10,000 Slovenes to Croatia. They were deported across the green border in the early stage of the occupation. A few groups were transported by buses or cars from the regions of Posavje and Prlekija to Samobor or Varaždin. They were left there and told that they would be executed if they returned to the German-occupied area. The majority of them crossed the NDH-Italian border and reached

the Province of Ljubljana, where they relied on charity and odd jobs to survive; others were resettled mostly to Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Ustashe authorities that had a deep aversion to Slovenes. They stayed in the homes of the expelled or executed Serbs and Jews. The Ustashe sought to strengthen Catholicism in these areas by populating them with Slovenes.



Fig. 47: Slovene expellees in Bjelovar, Croatia.

The Ustashe and members of the Croatian Home Guard inflicted violence on the Slovene population in the occupied Slovene territory, torturing and killing men, raping women, and looting. Close to 400 Slovenes were deported to Jasenovac, of whom upwards of 70% did not survive. The Italians failed to protect the border and the Ustashe troops entered the Slovene territory and perpetrated many crimes in the area and, with the end of the war approaching, in areas *en route* to their retreat in Austria. At least 823 Slovenes were killed by the NDH troops.²⁰⁰ The priest Andrej Zupanc from Sv. Križ-Pobočje described the hardships of the local population caused by all the armies that moved across his parish, including the partisan army. He wrote the following about one a military operation performed by the Ustashe:

200 The structure of the victims as to the cause of death was found in Troha, *Nasilje vojnih in povojnih dni*, p. 17.

"On 18 September 1942 all of Planina was set ablaze. The livestock that did not die in the fire was driven away.

The men were killed with machine guns at seven in the morning. It was not until the village was on fire that the children were released. All inhabitants of Brezovica were expelled too, those that did not hide were slaughtered. A traitor brought the Ustashe from Nova Sela, they walked across the Gorjanci hill range, killing people along the way. They burnt Planina to the ground, killed the wounded, the staff and the physician in the partisan field hospital at Prisjeka.²⁰¹

Vitomil Zupan, a Slovene author and partisan, fought on both sides of the border. He wrote a short story describing how the Ustashe were ambushed by partisans, and the violence that they perpetrated:

"The last burst of fire hit him as he was running through a snowdrift, foolishly planning to take shelter behind a thick beech tree and strengthen his defence. He would be able to defend himself there for a while. I emptied the entire cartridge clip into his big chest. He turned around, standing and watching us. He was hit by another dozen shots. He fell on his face. A wide trace ran along the track beaten in snow. He had been dragging his bag the whole time. He was lying on it at that point. It was difficult to turn him around. His body was full of gunshot wounds. I was disgusted by his flat, pockmarked face with a sunken nose and an open eye. I went through his pockets. I found a photograph of him holding a knife between his teeth. He had painted the blade red. The writing on the back read: Čokolon, this is a kiss. His bag? We were curious to open it. There were about three hundred and forty pairs of human eyes in it. Blue eyes were in a separate little bag. He used an indelible pencil to write on it in Croatian: young girls' blue eyes for Ante Pavelić."²⁰²

The fear of violence inflicted by the Ustashe was great in the villages along the border between the NDH and Italy throughout the war. Their brutal actions remain etched in the minds of the local population to this day. The only real protection was offered by the partisans, both Slovene and Croatian. A marked distinction can be detected in eyewitness testimonies of the local population when discussing the Italians and Ustashe. In many settlements along the border the locals got along with the Italians because they were forced to do so out of necessity. In many instances the Italian soldiers wanted merely to survive the war and thus often turned a blind eye or even collaborated with the partisans. Along with the cruelty of war, villages being set ablaze, hostage shootings,

201 The Prisjeka Partisan Hospital was located in Žumberak, on the Croatian side of the border. Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, str. 50.

202 Zupan, *Modre dekliske oči za Pavelića*, 370–372.

and deportations to concentration camps, some positive things still took place that transcended the hatred between the occupiers and the occupied population. There are cases when love between a Slovene girl and an Italian soldier overcame the danger or at least judgement coming from either side.²⁰³ In contrast, not a single positive word was heard about the Ustashe in dozens of interviews. What is more, according to testimonies even the Germans defended the local population from the Ustashe after Italy's capitulation. The house where Marija Koležnik was born still stands about 500 metres from the border crossing in Metlika, immediately next to the main road. She gave the following testimony:

*"The Ustashe came to Slovene territory for the first time in November 1943, when it was already liberated. They set afire our and our neighbours' auxiliary buildings. Ours was on fire, as were those belonging to the Štupar family, the Vrtačič family, the Milčinovič family and to the Milek family in Križevska Vas. They set ablaze only auxiliary buildings. The Ustashe came to our house, lined us against walls and because they were locals from Croatian villagers – my father and my mother knew them well – they demanded us to tell them the whereabouts of my brother because they knew that he had joined the partisans. We stood against a wall, waiting to be shot. Yes, I remember it all, but I do not remember what my parents said, something about a German officer coming and shouting at the Ustashe to leave us alone. They took our pig and it was quite well fed. Of course, we put out the fire."*²⁰⁴

Another partisan from Žumberak, Janko (Janta) Goleš, from Vukšiči near Radatoviči provided the following account: "We benefited from the border a great deal. The NDH was not allowed here, they knew – as did we – that an uprising was in store here. We have Orthodox roots."²⁰⁵ Gabre Bogdanovič, a former partisan and at the time of speaking a resident in the senior citizen's home in Črnomelj, said the following: "The fear that the Ustashe would arrive was present [...] they knew that Radatoviči supported the National Liberation War, people from Žumberak were the enemies of the NDH."²⁰⁶

Katica Adlešič and Marija Kordež spoke about the Ustashe looting and setting ablaze the village of Adlešiči.²⁰⁷ According to another eyewitness testimony, the Ustashe stood on the Croatian side of the river and shot at children swimming in the Kolpa.²⁰⁸ People were afraid to cross the border even though they had close relatives or other

203 Marija Jelenič, *Prasica vojska*.

204 Marija Koležnik, *Nemški oficir je nad ustaši kričal, da so nas pustili pri miru*.

205 Janko Goleš, *Meja nam je koristila*.

206 Gabre Bogdanovič, *Še danes obžalujejo*.

207 Katica Adlešič, Marija Kordež, *Adlešiče so izropali in požgali*.

208 Franciška Tahija, *Župnik je pri maši objavil, koliko jih je umrlo na Rabu*.

associations there. This was not due to the Italian or, subsequently, German control, it was due to the Croatians: "There is a trader here at Suhor, he crossed the border to buy something. The Ustashe got him and killed him on the spot. People did not dare to cross the border."²⁰⁹

In 1942, the partisan movement induced the Italians to fortify the border with the NDH, as had been done by the Germans before them. Occasionally, the Italians fired shots at the Ustashe as well. Initially, they planned to fortify the border in the Gorjanci hill range; subsequently, they decided to fortify it at the foot of Gorjanci, which implied that Gorjanci would be encircled. They sought to protect the border in much the same ways as the Germans, namely with barbed wire, minefields, by clearing the area and adding bunkers, trenches, and watchtowers, but they were only partly able to protect it with the military.²¹⁰ In Dolenjska, the fortification was begun in the east, shifting gradually westwards. Novo Mesto, Šentjernej and Metlika were encircled with barbed wire and bunkers. This did not stop the partisan movement, however, and as early as December 1942 the Italians were forced to leave some small outposts, particularly those standing along the border. From that point onwards they stayed mostly in towns, e.g. Črnomelj, Vinica, Stari Trg ob Kolpi, and Metlika, and the latter was almost completely encircled with barbed wire and bunkers.

Following Italy's capitulation in September 1943, the Germans took over the control of the border but were too weak to protect it completely,²¹¹ particularly in sections running along the liberated territories, one of which was Bela Krajina. The Main Staff of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Slovenia was stationed there, as was the Executive Committee of the Liberation Front and many other institutions. Up to the end of the war, Bela Krajina saw only a few sporadic incursions by the Germans or Ustashe.²¹²

209 Franc Zepuhar, *Italijani so na Vahti odvrgli večino orožja*.

210 Stanko Kušljan, *Takrat hrvaška meja ni obstajala*.

211 Blaž Štangelj, *O italijanskem in nemškem utrjevanju meje pod Gorjanci*.

212 Repe, *Diplomatsko razkosanje Slovenije*, 166–167; Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 25–26.

The Border between Germany and Hungary

Germany changed its plan in relation to Hungary as well, operating in accordance with its own interests. Germany's original intention was to integrate Prekmurje into the Reich. However, Prekmurje was occupied by Germany for other reasons, not on account of the annexation. Specifically, Hungary did not want to break the promise made in the treaty of friendship and collaboration that had been concluded with Yugoslavia on 12 December 1940. The Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Pal Teleki, adamantly opposed the war and committed suicide on 3 April due to the decision reached by the regent Miklós Horthy to accept Hitler's offer. To save face, Hungary tactically waited for the proclamation of the NDH. The Hungarian position was that the Kingdom of Yugoslavia thus ceased to exist.²¹³ In the meantime, Prekmurje was occupied by Germany without major difficulties, and transferred to Hungary at a ceremony held in Murska Sobota on 16 April 1941. In return Germany obtained four German-populated settlements in Goričko, i.e. Fikšinci, Kramarovci, Ocinje, and Rottenberg, as one part of the divided settlement of Serdica.

However, no formal agreement about the borders was signed between Germany and Hungary. The reason behind this did not lie in the potentially open question of Prekmurje, but was due to the disputed areas of Baranja and Banat. Germany thus waited for Hungary and the NDH to settle their relations, whereupon it would sign border agreements with the former, which did not happen. Indeed, Germany's relations with Hungary were often complicated. On the one hand, Germany needed Hungary for the attack on Yugoslavia and, on the other, it did not want to agree fully to Hungary's demands to revise the state borders. Banat was particularly problematic, because it was claimed by Hungary, Romania, and the NDH. If the NDH had obtained Banat, it would also need to have Bačka and Baranja, which lie between them. Consequently, Germany gave this area to Hungary, which annexed it on 16 December. Formally, Banat was left to Nedić's Serbia but, in reality, Germany kept it for itself because the local *Volksdeutsche* were given the authority there. In doing so, Germany was able to reject

²¹³ The *debellatio* of Yugoslavia was recognized by the Axis Powers and a few of their allies. It was not recognized by the anti-fascist coalition and the majority of states. Ferenc, *Nemška zasedba Prekmurja*, 107.

Romania's claims. Hungary was induced to agree to some sort of compensation for Banat and obtained territories around Mursko Središće and to the north of the river Mura, i.e. Prekmurje. Treatises produced by Helmut Carstanjen²¹⁴ and his Südostdeutsches Institut in Graz in the months leading up to the attack, as well as the resulting memorandums that were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, called for the division of Prekmurje between Hungary and Germany.²¹⁵ By establishing local groups of the Swabian-German Cultural Association (Schwäbisch-Deutscher Kulturbund) in German-populated villages, as well as in Murska Sobota and even Dolnja Lendava, which was regarded as being undisputedly Hungarian, preparations for this division were also underway on location.²¹⁶ With the Germans having occupied Prekmurje, Carstanjen strove to integrate all of Prekmurje into the Reich.²¹⁷

However, Berlin insisted on Hitler's decision from his guidelines for the partition of Slovenia issued on 6 and 12 April 1941 that all of Prekmurje would be obtained by Hungary.²¹⁸ They did not resettle the Prekmurje *Volksdeutsche* to the Reich, although this

214 Helmut Carstanjen (1905–1991) was considered to be the main proponent of the Germanization of Štajerska and other Slovene territories. He helmed the Südostdeutsches Institut and was member of the Nazi Party. He was active in the Volksbund für das Deutschtum im Ausland (Association of Germans Abroad) and in the Alpenländische Forschungsgemeinschaft (Research Association of Alpine Lands). He was an informant of the Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt) for Slovenia-related matters even before the attack of Yugoslavia. Subsequently, he helmed the Styrian section of the Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle, the main office for the formation of the German ethnic policy. Additionally, he was an advisor to head of the civil administration. Carstanjen was directly involved in the deportation of Slovenes and in the Germanization of Lower Styria, even though he lost his power due to a conflict with the SS. Nevertheless, in 1943 he devised a detailed plan for settlement strategies in Lower Styria with the intention of expanding the German linguistic frontier southwards. More can be read on the subject in Wedekind, *The Sword of Science*, 114–115.

215 "Prekmurje belonged to Hungary before the war. As evident from the enclosed sketch, the eastern areas are Hungarian and the western German. The inhabitants of Prekmurje are between them, they are a fragment of the Slovene nation that reached its own particular form due to its particular historical development. Correlating to greater neighbouring nations, in the west the inhabitants of Prekmurje gravitate towards the Reich, those in the east towards Hungary. Taking this into consideration, along with the fact that if the Styrian southern border were corrected they would hang in the air, it seems perfectly reasonable to divide them between Hungary and the Reich. We therefore suggest that from the spot to the east of Mota the new border would no longer run along the upstream stretch of the Mura, as was the case with the former border between Lower Styria and Hungary, but would divide Prekmurje in the direction from the south to the north. The proposed border would leave present-day Yugoslavia in the proximity of Sv. Katarina. However, it would not continue along the modern-day border of the Reich, it would encompass areas for which we would suggest to be annexed by the Reich if the border with Hungary were to be subject to correction." Werner, Gerhard (= Helmut Carstanjen). *Das Deutschtum des Obermurgebietes. Geographischer Jahresbericht aus Österreich, Bd. XVII, 1937*, 70–90. Cited after: Ferenc, *Nemška zasedba Prekmurja*, 105–106.

216 Ibid.

217 "Prekmurje, with its district authorities Murska Sobota and Dolnja Lendava, is under the German military administration. The population of Murska Sobota has welcomed the German army and is concerned that the Germans might leave again and that Hungarians might arrive. It is their wish to be united with the German Reich." PA AA, Reichsaussenministerium, sheet no. 1530734, Carstanjen's telegram no. 249, 14 April 1941, cited after: Ferenc, *Nemška zasedba Prekmurja*, 118. Other demands made by the population and by individuals that were sent to the German foreign ministry, with a wish for Prekmurje's annexation.

218 Ribbentrop responded to these demands, maintaining that he would "stick to his promise to Hungary that it would get back its historical border. Four settlements in upper Prekmurje are the exception. However, it would not be allowable to turn these four municipalities into twenty-two municipalities." Ferenc, *Nemška zasedba Prekmurja*, 118–119.

option existed and was defended by Ribbentrop himself.²¹⁹ Eventually, Germany decided to keep Banat. Additionally, Germany abandoned the original idea that the NDH would come under the influence of Hungary and left it to Italy, even though the Italians were not convinced that this would really happen. On 24 April, two days before his meeting with *Poglavnik* Pavelić, Count Ciano wrote the following into his diary: “The attitude of the Germans in all this is ambiguous. When we met at Vienna they gave us a free hand. But up to what point are they sincere?”²²⁰

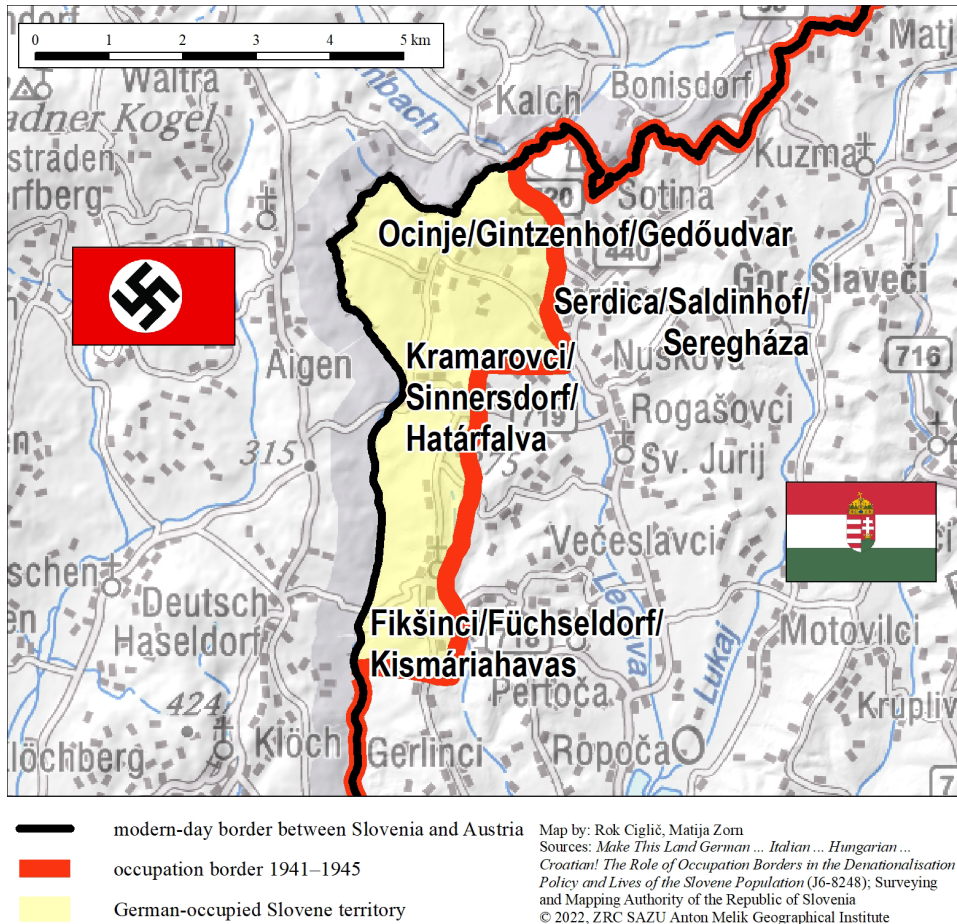


Fig. 48: Four villages in Goričko were annexed by Germany.

219 Ibid., 119.

220 Ciano, Galeazzo. *Zaupni dnevnik grofa Ciana*. 12.

The previous day, i.e. on 23 April 1941, Ribbentrop informed the German ambassador in Budapest, Ehrmansdorf, that he had told the Hungarian ambassador Sztójay that Germany reserved the rights to or wished to obtain three purely German settlements to the north of Radkersburg, to which Hungary had agreed.²²¹ On 3 May 1941 the Hungarian embassy informed Budapest that the German Secretary of State Woermann had mentioned German demands to Hungary about the Croatian borders: "Germany expects to obtain a few settlements in the border area of Prekmurje and Međimurje that were annexed by Hungary."²²² The reference to Međimurje implies the Slovene-populated or ethnically mixed settlements of Štrigova and Razkrižje and their surroundings. Prekmurje and Međimurje fell to the Germans in a flash, and their occupation was a rapid one. The Germans had full control of the territory the day after the attack, i.e. on 7 April. Military troops crossed the rivers Drava and Mura. Having initially seized Lendava, they crossed the river Mura and continued via Mursko Središće towards Čakovec, which they had bombed beforehand. On 16 April they handed over Međimurje to the Hungarians and continued to keep Štrigova and Razkrižje for some time. "Not many people have bad memories of the period of the German administration in Međimurje because nobody wanted to live under the Hungarian occupation again. The Germans were seen off with flowers in Kotoriba."²²³

The population of Prekmurje had similarly mixed feelings about the Germans, but not for long. When outlining the border, the Germans did not take much notice of the local people. As indicated by the case of the village of Gerlinci, the border ran along estates, separating houses from auxiliary buildings.²²⁴ In the settlement of Serdica, which was divided, the status of ten houses was disputable.²²⁵ A series of diplomatic notes relating to Serdica was exchanged between the Germans and Hungarians.²²⁶ In its upper part, Serdica was an affluent and well-organized German-populated village; using his boot, a local official drew a line in the ground on the bridge over the river Lendava, where, subsequently, the border was outlined.²²⁷ Even though the Germans took strict measures to prevent smuggling or resale of livestock, which had to be marked – the letter U was used to identify Hungarian and D for German livestock, the border here was "softer" and more permeable. Preserved

221 Liptai, *HorthyMagyarország*, 81–82.

222 Juhász, *Diplomáciai iratok Magyarország külpolitikájához*, 1095. Translated by: Attila Kovács.

223 Kovač, *Odnos prema Međimurju*, p. 18.

224 Alojz Grah, Jože Gombac, *Gerlinci (Mama je hodila v štiri osnovne šole)*.

225 Including Dajčev Mlin, a mill situated on the Mlinščica that is located about 100 m away, which was wanted by both parties but eventually obtained by the Hungarians.

226 Attila Kovács, *Fikšinci, Kramarovci, Ocinje, Serdica*.

227 Rudi Gaber, *Nacist je s škornjem določil mejo v Serdici*.

photographs indicate that the German and Hungarian customs officers socialized with each other; there are even a few photographs or postcards with children at the border.²²⁸ *Inter alia*, the Germans and the Hungarians jointly regulated the course of the river Mura.

The occupation and delimitation of Prekmurje were marked by the intertwining of interethnic relations; consequently, they were met with decidedly different responses in different contexts, as indicated by eyewitness testimonies gathered in the scope of the focal research. Naturally, for example, joy was felt in German-populated villages that were integrated into the Reich, the villagers' lives were better than they would have been in Hungary.²²⁹

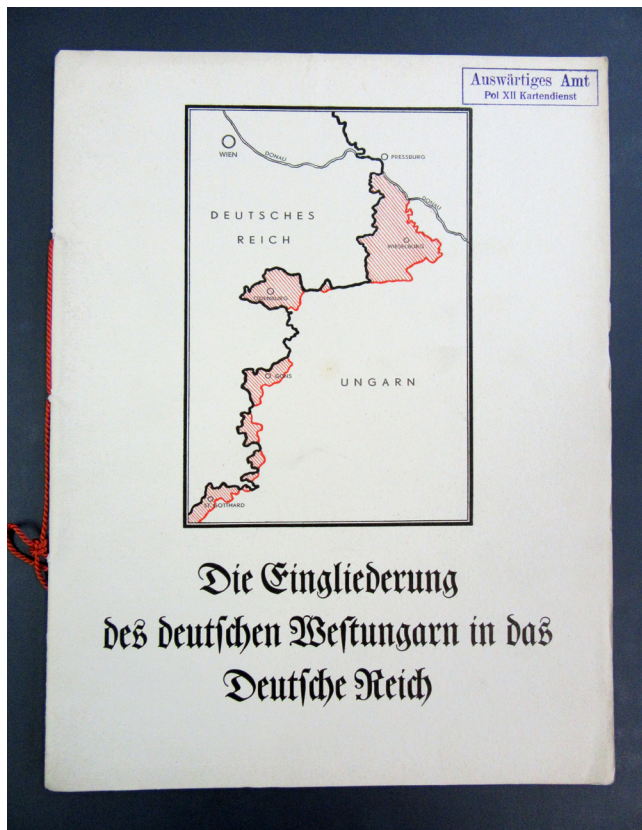


Fig. 49: The cover of the booklet *Die Eingliederung des deutschen Westungarn in das Deutsche Reich* (Integration of German West Hungary into the German Reich). Geheime Reichssache. Anlagen.

228 A collection of postcards from Silvester Štingl's personal archive.

229 Ibid.

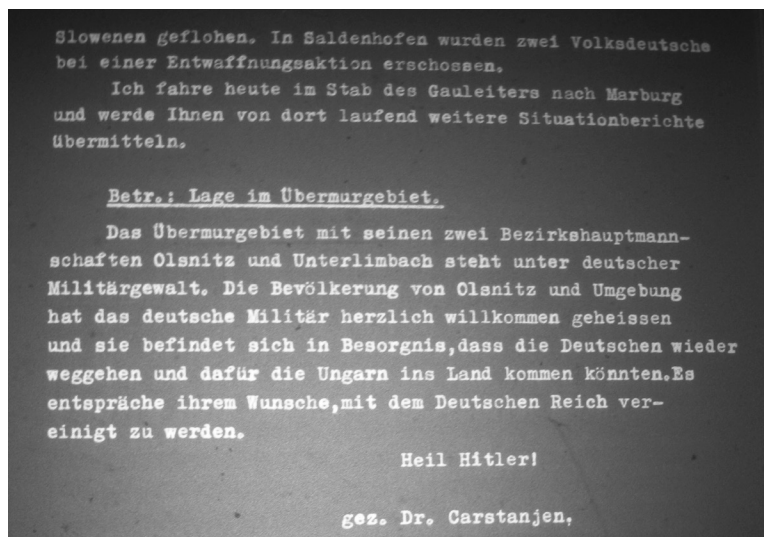


Fig. 50: In a telegram sent from Graz to Berlin on 14 April 1941, Dr Helmut Carstanjen, an associate of the Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland, wrote about Prekmurje and its two districts, i.e. Murska Sobota (Olsnitz) and Lendava (Unterlimbach), being temporary under German military command. This was well-received by the local population, that expressed a wish for Prekmurje to be integrated into Germany. On 16 April the Germans transferred their authority in Prekmurje to the Hungarians.

The Prekmurje *Volksdeutsche* had to stay even though they had been promised they would be resettled. The bulk of them were quite prosperous, which made their situation easier. The Prekmurje Hungarians were very happy with the integration into Hungary because the efforts that they had made in the interwar period bore fruit. The Prekmurje Jews had it the worse. They were sent to concentration camps in 1944, and only a few of them survived. Similarly, the Romani were also subject to violence.²³⁰ Slovenes who had settled in Prekmurje in the interwar period shared a similar fate, and were deported to the Szárvár concentration camp.²³¹ The majority of people from Prekmurje, originally Slovene settlers, were subject to forced Hungarization, mobilization, and other measures taken by the Hungarian authorities. About 90,000 inhabitants of Prekmurje, some 15,000 of whom were Hungarians, lived in the Hungarian-occupied territory. The border ran along the stream Lendava; the stream Kučnica, a left tributary of the river Mura, also functioned as the delimitation line. From the Middle Ages onwards this watercourse was one of a few that were seen as a natural delimitation between the German Empire and Hungary.²³² The tripoint was turned into a border between two states.²³³

230 Mario Sandreli, *Sami so si morali kopati grob in pri tem peti*.

231 Jože Vidič, *Otrok iz taborišča Sarvar*.

232 Alojz Grah, *Kučnica*.

233 Repe, *Diplomatsko razkosanje Slovenije*, 167–168; Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 27.



Fig. 51: The Hungarian-German border crossing on the border between Međimurje and Lower Styria, August 1942. Franjo Štingl sitting on a carpet with his son Silvester Štingl. Franjo was a Croat from Čakovec and kept a shop in Dobrovnik. His wife, Silvester's mother, who was Slovene, came originally from Kranj and worked as a teacher in Dobrovnik, where she met her future husband.



Fig. 52: The Szárvár concentration camp.

The Border between Hungary and the NDH

The relations between Hungary and the NDH were complicated, not only due to Hungary's revisionism and the wish of both states to obtain Banat, Međimurje and other territories, but also because Hungary had supported Pavelić's Ustashe movement before the war. The Ustashe were trained at Janka-Puszta or Jankovac camp in Zala County and were, along with Italy, behind the assassination of King Alexander in Marseilles in 1934. Similar to the case of Italy, Pavelić also made territorial concessions in the case of Hungary. He signed a collaboration agreement with Tibor Eckhardt in Zurich on 23 July 1933, stipulating that Međimurje would be obtained by one or the other state, depending on the result of the plebiscite.²³⁴ In line with this agreement, Baranja, Bačka, and Banat would be returned to Hungary.²³⁵ Pavelić's hands were more or less tied. The NDH did not recognize the annexation of Međimurje by Hungary, but it was quite passive in this matter and ended up in an ambiguous position on many occasions. With the bulk of borders running along rivers, these problems were caused by altered river beds and, in part, also by electric power plants and mills. The commission of the NDH Ministry of Foreign Affairs ordered an on-site survey of the border with Hungary in May 1942, when they had almost no control over other borders. It is evident from the report that there were no major disputes; however, this does not mean that there were no problems.²³⁶ An on-site survey was performed because of the operation of the border commission in Budapest that convened meetings between 25 April and 11 July 1942. The commission detected problems on islets in the Danube's middle course that Hungary left to the NDH, *inter alia*, to reduce the pressure that the NDH exerted on account of Međimurje. A partial agreement that dealt with the eastern border of the NDH was signed in late August. The majority of issues relating to the eastern border were also settled.²³⁷

234 Naturally, electoral records would be of key importance in this case. The propaganda was strong for both sides because there were many pro-Hungarians in the area. Slovenes were disregarded by both sides.

235 Jonjić, *Hrvatska vanjska politika*, 535.

236 Milošević, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije*, 135–136.

237 Kovač, *Odnos prema Međimurju*, 40.

Both Prekmurje and Međimurje were originally occupied by Germans. They allowed the Ustashe to establish their authority. The Ustashe camp that was organized in the area in question was helmed by Teodor Košak. He issued the following proclamation:

"Men and women of Croatia! Men and women of Međimurje! It is on account of the firm will of the Croatian nation and on behalf of the poglavnik of the Independent State of Croatia Dr Ante Pavelić that from this moment onward I assume the civil authority over Croatian Međimurje, including the Municipality of Štrigova and Razkrižje. At the same time, I am appealing to the entire population to obey my orders to preserve as much peace and order as possible. Even the smallest acts against the interests of the Croatian nation will be most severely punished.

*Signed by Teodor Košak, a pharmacist, Commander of Croatian Međimurje.
Čakovec, 7 April 1941"²³⁸*



Fig. 53: The Ustashe proclamation of the annexation of Međimurje, Štrigova, and Razkrižje by the NDH. Their plans were not realized because Germany gave Međimurje, Štrigova, and Razkrižje to Hungary.

Ethnically mixed Štrigova and Razkrižje were not part of Croatia before the attack, they were part of the Drava Banovina. However, a severe political battle was fought for both settlements in the late 1930s. Both the Slovene and Croatian sides organized events there, the Croatian Catholic Church was particularly active, often in collaboration with the Croatian Peasant Party. Slovene and Croatian periodicals rooted for their own sides; however, in the early 1940 it became clear through texts published in the Slovene Catholic press that Slovenia had yielded. Delegations of the local Slovene and Croatian population visited Slovene or Croatian politicians, respectively, expressing their wish to live under Slovenia or Croatia.²³⁹ The highest-ranking Croatian politicians, including head of the Croatian Peasant Party Vladko Maček or *Ban* Ivan Šubašić made public promises that both settlements would be under Croatia soon. The Slovene side, with the Slovene Peoples' Party at the head, also became more favourably disposed towards this idea after Korošec's death. Having succeeded Korošec, Kulovec was in good relations with the Croats, unlike his predecessor. He was open to forming connections with the Croatian Peasant Party and Maček, who, at the same time, strove for a dualist Yugoslavia, with Slovenes being subordinated to Croats.²⁴⁰ An article published in *Slovenec* in January 1941 is a clear indicator of the direction in which things were going. It summarized *Hrvatska straža*, a small Croatian Catholic periodical, which published a bombastic text that read: "The election of Dr Kulovec as the successor of the late Dr Korošec in the political leadership of the Slovene nation has received a positive welcome from the entire Croatian public. The right man arrived at the right time. Dr Kulovec has been given a warm reception due to his friendly disposition towards Croats."²⁴¹

Words hailing a bright, common future were followed by the key point:

"Štrigova and Osilnica are the main dispute in this respect. However, we have it on good authority that this issue will be settled soon by mutual agreement. We know that Dr Kulovec attaches great importance to the speedy resolution of this question. Once this question is removed from the agenda, there will be no more issues in this respect.

The well-conceived interests of Croats and Slovenes walk side by side and do not cross each other's paths.

*[...] We must support and respect each other and not interfere with each other's spheres of interest. For the sake of this, may the year 1941 mark the beginning of friendly cooperation between Croats and Slovenes."*²⁴²

239 Deputacija iz Štrigove pri dr. Kulovcu, 5.

240 Repe, *S puško in knjigo*, 16.

241 *Hrvatskoslovenski odnošaji*, 2.

242 Ibid.

The liberal camp was not so positively disposed towards this issue, pointing out that Štrigova and Razkrižje were not only attached to Ljutomer administratively, but also economically.²⁴³ It became clear one month before the attack on Yugoslavia that the two leading Catholic parties had agreed for Štrigova and Razkrižje to be part of the Banovina of Croatia:

*“On his return from Belgrade to Ljubljana, Minister Dr Kulovec stopped in Zagreb, where he attended a meeting with Ban Dr Šubašić. Dr Maček joined them later. Dr Kulovec was in high spirits after the meeting but declined to comment. However, he did say that the question of Štrigova would be resolved soon, that Štrigova would become part of Croatia, and that the municipalities of Draga and Osilnica would be removed from the Srez Čabar and integrated into the Drava Banovina.”*²⁴⁴

Eventually, neither Slovenes nor Croats obtained Razkrižje and Štrigova, because Prekmurje and Međimurje were annexed by Hungary. The Ustashe's authority lasted a mere eight days. They managed to issue a few proclamations about the compulsory handover of weapons, publish one issue of the periodical *Slobodno Međimurje*, as well as a few orders regarding the maintenance of public order and peace. They overprinted Yugoslav postage stamps by placing the inscription “the State of Croatia” in the upper part, the Ustashe coat-of-arms in the centre, and the inscription “Međimurje” in the lower part.²⁴⁵ In his response to Ribbentrop's telegram, where he was asked to recognize the NDH – which was done by Hungary – Horthy announced that he sought to annex Međimurje, which was not in contrast with Germany's interests. Pro-Hungarians were very active as well, and sent several delegations to Budapest. On the other hand, people from Međimurje who worked in Germany lobbied the German authorities for integration into the NDH, as did NDH diplomacy. On 13 April 1941, in the context of Germany's demand to partake in military operations in Serbia, the Hungarian government adopted the decision to occupy Međimurje, which was at the time still German-occupied. With the consent of Germany, this happened three days later, i.e. on 16 April, but under the condition that the occupation would not involve Banat. On 9 July Hungary introduced civil administration in the area.²⁴⁶

The situation in Razkrižje and Štrigova was not that simple. The Germans hesitated for a while, contemplating if these two settlements should share the fate of the German-populated villages in Goričko or if they should be left to the Hungarians. Eventually, the German army departed from this area and left it to Hungary even before the

243 *Podaljšanje avtobusne proge iz Ljutomera v Štrigovo*, 3.

244 *Doma in po svetu*, 4.

245 Kovač, *Odnos prema Međimurju*, 16.

246 *Ibid.*, 17–18.

introduction of the Hungarian civil administration in Međimurje, which was reported by the Slovene press in the Province of Ljubljana as well.²⁴⁷ People living in this area got used to living along the border and to the problems resulting from it, and did their best to survive under difficult conditions.²⁴⁸

The lives of the population are still marked by the consequences of pre-war and wartime divisions.²⁴⁹

An agreement about the entire course of the border between Hungary and the NDH was not signed. This was primarily the result of disagreements over Banat and Međimurje, on which these two states had little influence, because Germany made decisions about the most important matters. In principle, Germany was more favourably disposed towards Hungary, which was an independent state and an important ally, while the NDH came into being as a German puppet state. Concurrently, in terms of the NDH, Germany had to pay more attention to Italy than to Hungary. Both states lobbied heavily for their respective interests in Berlin, with the Hungarians being significantly more successful because the Germans agreed to their demand for Međimurje as a substitute for Banat, which they – the Germans – kept for themselves.²⁵⁰

247 *Občini Štrigova in Razkrižje pod Madžarsko*, 2.

248 Stanko Ivanušič, *Mejni kamen iz 17. stoletja*.

249 Stanko Ivanušič, *Protestniki iz Razkrižja*.

250 Repe, *Diplomatsko razkosanje Slovenije*, 168; Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 28.

Tripoints

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia had two tripoints in the Slovene territory, one of which was in Prekmurje, namely that of Yugoslavia, Austria (Germany after the Anschluss in 1938), and Hungary. The other tripoint, that of Yugoslavia, Italy, and Austria (Germany), was at Peč above Rateče. The former became the German-Hungarian border in this section; due to the annexation of the German-populated villages in Goričko and the integration of Prekmurje into Hungary, this border was outlined anew and shifted westwards.



Fig. 54: The former (and present-day) tripoint of Austria, Slovenia, and Hungary in Goričko. During the war, this was the border between Germany and Hungary.

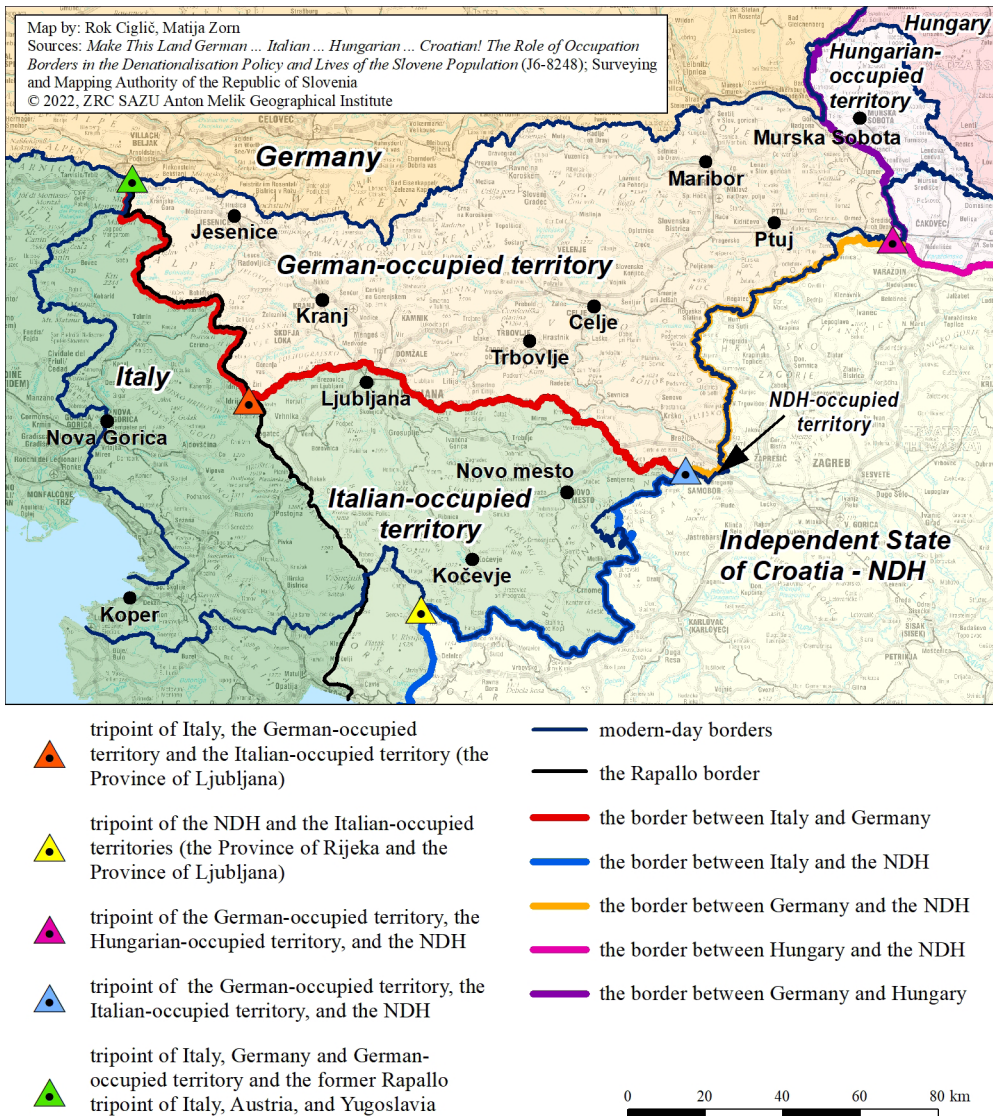


Fig. 55: Tripoints during World War II.

Owing to the establishment of the NDH, the tripoint of Germany, Hungary and the NDH came into being in the modern-day Croatian Municipality of Svibovac Podravski, near Središče ob Dravi.

The other tripoint remained the border between Italy and Germany up to Italy's capitulation in 1943. It continued to exist as a border between two states until the end of the war, namely as the border between Germany and the Italian fascist republic in the north of Italy. As mentioned before, the former German-Italian border subsequently lost its function because Germany occupied the Italian territory and annexed it to the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral. The tripoint at Spodnji Vrsnik near Žiri, which came into being after the occupation, was specific and "internal" in one of its sections: it delineated Italy, Germany, and the Province of Ljubljana, which was formally part of the Kingdom of Italy but was still bounded by the Rapallo border as some type of an internal Italian border. This "tripoint" also became irrelevant with Italy's capitulation.

The tripoint near the village of Brvi beneath Gadova Peč was an old administrative border from the period of the Habsburg Monarchy, separating the Austrian and the Hungarian parts of the empire. Between 1941 and 1943 this was a tripoint of the Third Reich, Italy, and the NDH.²⁵¹



Fig. 56: A detail from a German map showing the tripoint.

251 Tromeja NDH, Nemčija Italija.





Figs. 57, 58, and 59: The tripoint of Germany, Italy, and the NDH near the stream Piroški Potok beneath Gadova Peč. Dr Božo Repe, Dr Božo Flajšman, Dr Peter Mikša, Lojze Štih and Ivan Petrišič, president and vice president of the Krško Association of Veterans, unearthing the tripoint boundary marker. This boundary marker was identified on location by Ivan Petrišič. The research team and representatives of the Association of Veterans discovered it after Dr Matija Zorn and Dr Rok Ciglič had adjusted German Austro-Hungarian maps with the actual situation on location and with a satellite image. The locals had searched for it for decades. The nearby stream flooded the area a few months after the unearthing, and this boundary marker was once again buried under a pile of soil. However, its location is known and relevant interested parties in the Municipality of Krško believe that this boundary marker could be turned into a memorial that would be accessed via a hiking trail. In the period of Austria-Hungary, this boundary marker had identified the border between Carniola and Styria, while the occupiers used it to identify the tripoint.

As time passed, the tripoint located to the south of Središče ob Dravi was forgotten. It was rediscovered by our research group on the basis of calculations obtained by comparing maps produced during World War II with modern-day maps that allow location errors that do not exceed 25 metres. The tripoint in the modern-day Municipality of Svibovec Podravski (here the Hungarian-occupied territory extended across the river Drava) does not exist anymore – it stood in a river basin that is often flooded and the river tends to change its bed. However, a few traces of defensive trenches are preserved.²⁵²

252 Božo Repe, *Nekdanja tromeja med NDH Nemčijo in Madžarsko*.



Fig. 60: Dr Peter Mikša, Dr Božidar J. Flajšman, Dr Darja Kerec, Dr Božo Repe, and Dr Kornelija Ajlec in the location of the former tripoint of the NDH, Germany, and Hungary that shifted the border further westwards with the annexation of Prekmurje. At the present, this former tripoint lies in the marshy Drava river basin, on the Croatian side of the border. No material remnants of the tripoint are preserved due to the river's changing bed.

The period after World War II saw the restoration of two tripoints (Peč above Rateče and the tripoint in the Municipality of Kuzma in Goričko, near the settlement of Trdkova) and after 1991 Yugoslavia was succeeded by independent Slovenia.²⁵³ The tripoint of Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary, which came into being after Croatia's independence, is "hidden" in the marshy area of the confluence of Velika Krka and Mura, in an area that is difficult to access.²⁵⁴

253 Repe, *Diplomatsko razkosanje Slovenije*, 168; Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 28–30.

254 Božo Repe, *Tromeja med Slovenijo, Hrvaško in Madžarsko*.



Fig. 61: A part of the research team on the tripoint of Slovenia, Hungary, and Croatia in the marshy river basins of Velika Krka and Mura (Dr Božo Repe, Dr Darja Kerec, Dr Božidar Flajšman, Dr Kornelija Ajlec, Dr Peter Mikša).

Slovenia – A Concentration Camp

The occupation borders were part of extensive occupying systems that restricted the movement and imposed strict control on the everyday lives of the population. Had satellite images been available at the time, they would have shown Slovenia as a large concentration camp, whose borders were encircled with barbed wire, bunkers, minefields, and watchtowers.

Similarly, many areas – or we could even say sectors – were additionally encircled within this heavily guarded circle. Access to these was regulated by the same principle that applied to border crossings.



Fig. 62: Italian troops on parade, Ljubljana, 1 June 1941.

Ljubljana, which was a border city during World War II, stands as a symbol of cities or towns that were encircled with barbed wire.



Fig. 63: Soldiers and civilians standing on the border fenced with barbed wire in the Province of Ljubljana.

Following the partition of the occupied territory, the Municipality of Ljubljana, which was at the time much larger than it is nowadays, was divided between Italy and Germany. There were three Italian-German border crossings on the municipality's outskirts. One of them was situated in Ježica, on a bridge across the river Sava.

The Germans shifted the border to the right bank of the river Sava, which was considered to be a natural border between Germany and Italy. They thus connected their territory in both parts of Ljubljana. They built a road along the river Sava, modern-day Obvozna cesta, which is even nowadays popularly referred to as Nemška cesta (German Road). In the initial stage of the occupation, the railway tracks ran across the Italian-occupied territory. Initially, the Germans transported expellees from Gorenjska to Croatia and Serbia via Ljubljana's Italian-occupied parts. The inhabitants of Ljubljana gave the occupants food and clothes when these trains made a stop in the city. Parallel to Obvozna cesta, they built a new railway branch, running from Šiška to Črnuče. From Črnuče onwards, the railway tracks followed modern-day tracks to Kamnik and forked right immediately before what is today Štajerska cesta, running

along the northern part of the industrial zone next to the street Brnčičeva ulica. The tracks terminate at the end of this industrial zone. From the fork to the end of industrial zone, the tracks measure upwards of one kilometre in length and run towards the southeast. From the modern-day industrial zone the tracks ran towards the east for more than seven kilometres. In this spot the remnants of the railway tracks are no longer identifiable because their course corresponds to that of the road from Črnuče to Dolsko, nor are they visible on survey laser scanning images. The course of the current road diverges from the railway tracks to the south of Podgora pri Dolskem. Here the remnants of the tracks can be seen on site, as well as on Google Maps or Lidar images. A brief section of the railway tracks was straight and then the railway line made a right turn towards the river, crossing the Sava and joining the Ljubljana–Litija railway line at the Laze railway station. The railway embankment between Šiška and Črnuče is still visible and a few concrete remnants can be seen down its former course, particularly in front of the bridge across Sava, the modern-day road bridge.²⁵⁵ The Laze railway station thus became a transport hub by means of which Germany avoided transporting people and goods via “Italian” Ljubljana.²⁵⁶ Concurrently, it became an important spot for the operation and requirements of the resistance movement.²⁵⁷



Fig. 64: The building that accommodated border guards on the German side of the Border at Ježica near Ljubljana, located along what it today Celovška cesta 274.

255 Bojan Balkovec, *Most čet Savo pri Lazah*.

256 Eva in Josip Kovič, *Obmejna postaja Laze*.

257 Eva Kovič, *Švercal je cigarete za partizane*.



Fig. 65: The remnants of a watchtower at Ježica.



Fig. 66: The border between Italy and Germany on Ljubljana's Celovška cesta.

Two border crossings were situated at Šiška, one on modern-day Celovška cesta, in the proximity of the inn Žibert, in front of today's Prušnikova ulica, which was at the time the old Celovška cesta and ran through the city.²⁵⁸ The other border crossing stood nearby, on modern-day Cesta Andreja Bitenca. These border crossings were located at a short distance, probably because Celovška cesta was a busy municipal street. Additionally, a tramway line ran along it, with trams operating across the border.²⁵⁹ The operation of trams across the border was banned by the Germans in October 1941, and the line terminated at the last stop before the border, although the border crossing remained. The border crossing on the street Cesta Andreja Bitenca was probably built at this location because at the time this road was considerably wider. In fact, it was the main traffic artery, running from Gorenjska to Trieste past Ljubljana, and was used by waggoners for transporting timber. With the introduction of the border during the war and the subsequent changes in urban planning, this road lost its importance.²⁶⁰

Ljubljana is the most famous example of a city that was fenced in by means of barbed wire, and is in this regard followed by Novo Mesto. Encircling towns and cities with barbed wire was the *modus operandi* of fascist Italy. Our research confirmed that Metlika, Semič, Višnja Gora, Ribnica, Kočevje, Trebnje, and Grosuplje were also encircled. These settlements were fully encircled by barbed wire and could be reached by using a guarded border crossing. Šentjernej was doubly encircled, as the Italian blockade of the border with Croatia was located to the south of this settlement.

Črnomelj was partly encircled with barbed wire, as were some villages in Bela Krajina, where a few houses were connected, fortified, turned into military posts and encircled with bunkers and barbed wire. If only one part of a town was surrounded by barbed wire, this was in the majority of cases due to the additional fortification of military or defensive posts. The research conducted thus far confirms that this was the case with the villages of Zilje, Griblje, and Podzemelj. Barbed wire surrounded the church on the summit of Trška Gora. Logatec, located on the other side of the Italian-occupied territory, was also encircled by barbed wire as well. Settlements were fortified with barbed wire and military posts, watchtowers, bunkers were built, minefields were planted or mines attached to barbed wire. These techniques resulted in restrictions of movement and contacts between individuals, families, and communities. People lived in a constant state of fear and many were forced to cross the border and barbed wire secretly to secure the bare necessities. Life was even more difficult in areas controlled by the local collaborationist troops, because the inhabitants knew each other very well.

258 The new Celovška cesta was built in 1977, whereupon the old one was renamed Prušnikova cesta.

259 Tram tracks in front of the border crossing are still visible on preserved photographs.

260 Repe, *Diplomatsko razkosanje Slovenije*, 169–170; Repe et al., *Mejni kamni, bodeča žica, stražni stolpi in minska polja*, 30–31.

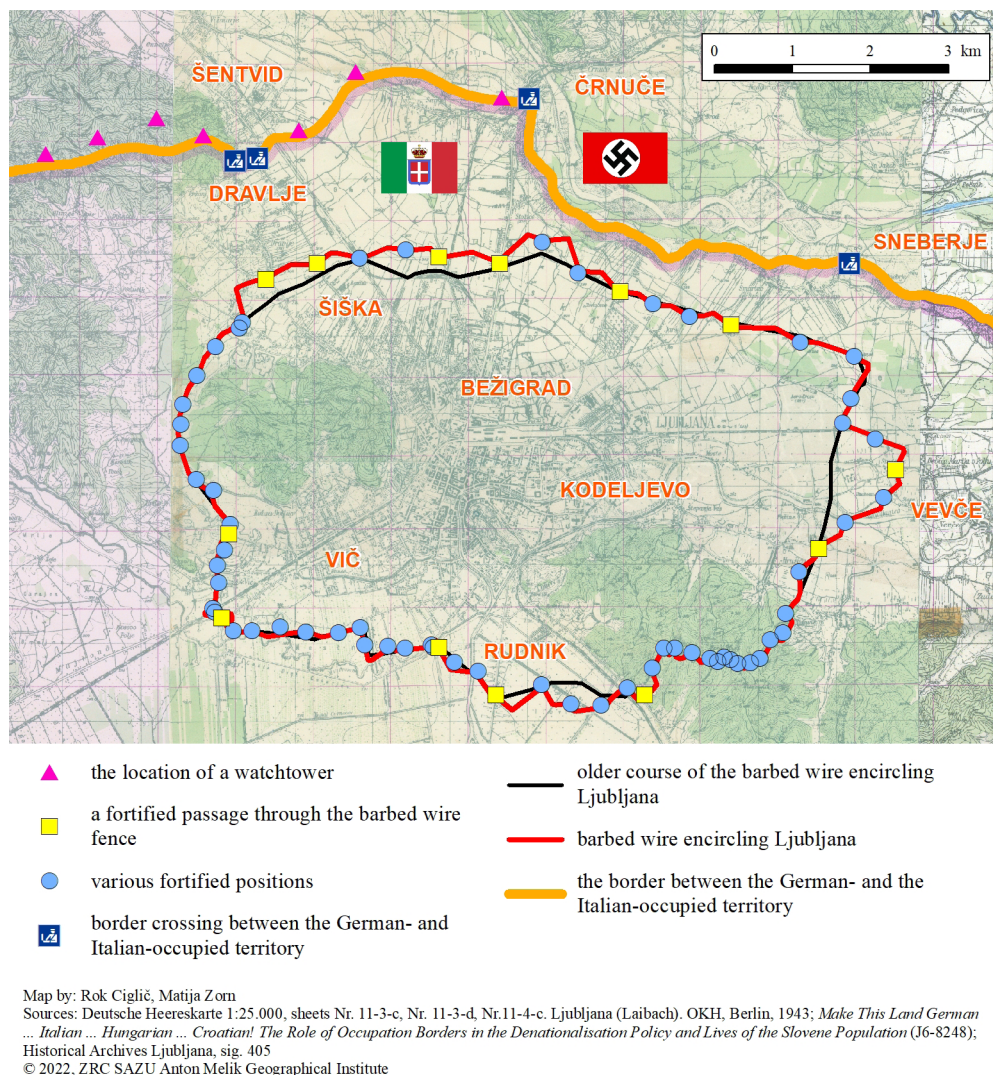


Fig. 67: A map of Ljubljana that was encircled by barbed wire.

Towns and cities encircled by barbed wire underwent a complete change if compared to the pre-war situation. For instance, Semič was encircled in July 1942, during the great Italian offensive. Barbed wire was installed around the city, as well as 11 defensive bunkers that were surrounded by trenches. Three border crossings led in and out of the city; they were protected with *chevaux de frise*. The belfry was converted into an observation post, which was the highest defensive tower in town. A heavy machine gun

and a mortar were placed on it. According to a partisan report, 180 Italian soldiers were garrisoned in Semič, as well as 140 to 180 members of the Anti-Communist Volunteer Militia or the White Guard (*Milizia Volontaria Anti Comunista, MVAC*).²⁶¹

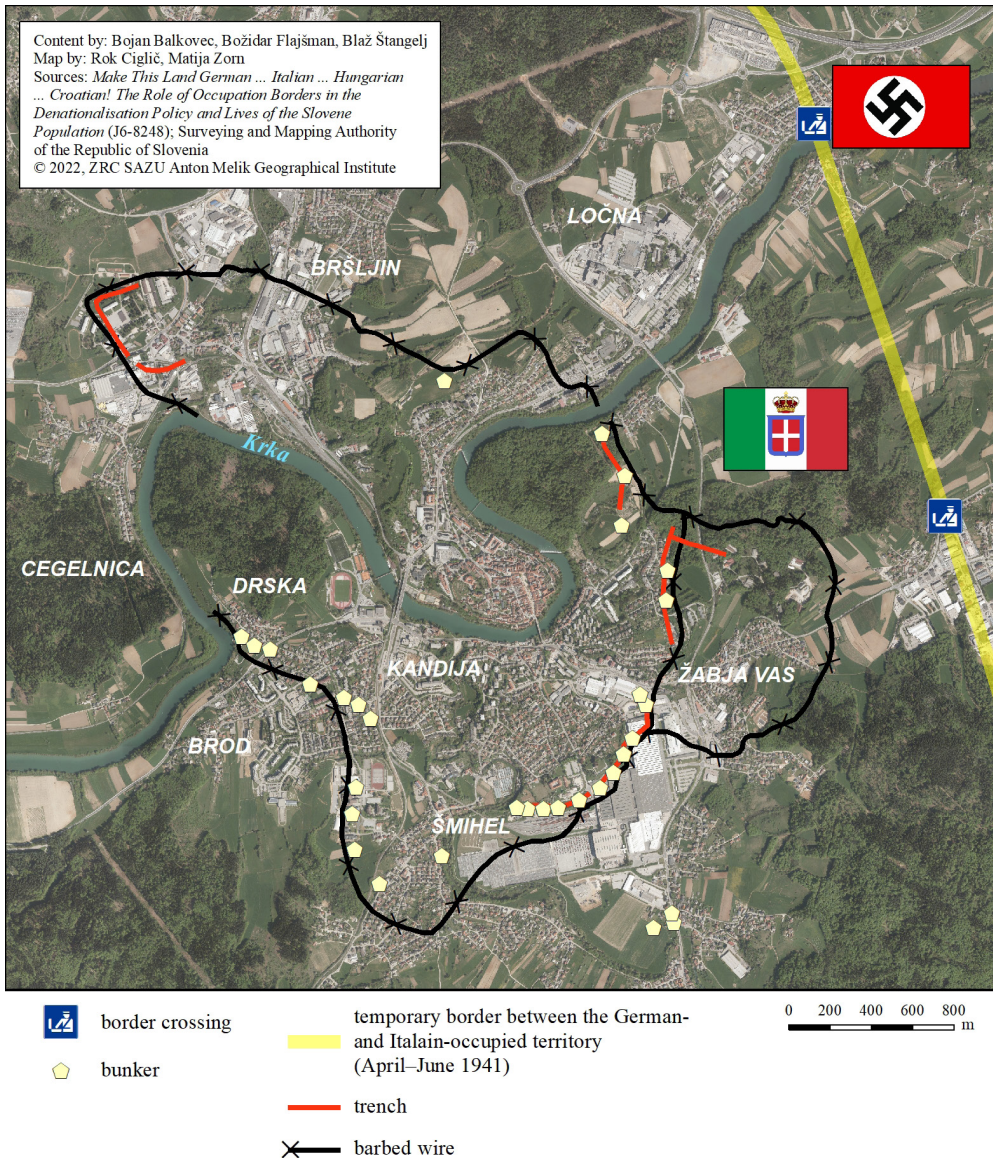


Fig. 68: Novo Mesto surrounded by barbed wire.

261 Adapted from the exhibition: *Vinceremo, videt ćemo. Okupacijske meje v Beli Krajini 1941–1945*.

Following Italy's capitulation, the Germans either kept barbed-wire fencing or continued to install it. Partisan-controlled liberated areas that the Germans could not reoccupy were the exception in this regard. However, they managed to reoccupy Idrija after a short-lived liberation by partisans in the autumn of 1943. In the interwar period Idrija was situated on the border between Italy and Yugoslavia, and from 1941 to 1943 between Italy and Germany. It was gradually surrounded by barbed wire and fortified after the occupation, which highlights the town's importance in all state formations. Due to its position along the border and the mine, the Italians built barracks in Idrija, as well as fortifications of the so-called Alpine Wall to the east and north of it. The Alpine Wall was an Italian fortification line on Italy's side of the Rapallo border. Logatec was encircled in a similar way, and a few small towns were encircled in part.

Towns and cities were primarily encircled by barbed wire in order to blockade them due to partisan attacks, but also to prevent contacts between the population and partisans, and thus the movement of people, information and goods. Even though it was protected by barbed wire, people crossed the border on a daily basis to secure what they needed to live, keep in touch with their families, and attend religious services. The partisan units crossed the border more or less successfully, entering and leaving areas that were surrounded by barbed wire. Such partisan movements gradually established a successful and complex network of couriers that reached all fringes of the Slovene territory, successfully crossing all occupation borders.



Fig. 69: Modern-day borders of the Republic of Slovenia.

Appendix²⁶²

A report on the clearing of the border strip in Upper Carniola

I The Premise

The *Führer* ordered the implementation of security measures at the German-Italian border in Upper Carniola.

The overall management of measures to establish the border strip is in the hands of the Higher SS and Police Leader in the Military District XVIII, *SS-Gruppenführer* and Lieutenant General of the Police Rösener.

Because it is necessary to limit the entire border traffic to specific border crossings and to prohibit any other cross-border passages, these measures aim to ensure the optimal control of the border by using minimum power and to prevent unauthorised crossing of the border.

The security measures include:

- A) Clearing the border strip of people, houses and other buildings in a width that allows for good control;
- B) Cutting down trees in wooded areas in this strip of land, clearing overgrown areas and shrubbery; C) Installing wire obstacles along the border that are supported by additional security measures in specific spots.

The Higher SS and Police Leader devolved the detachment and the resettlement of the population in the border strip in question, along with the related measures, to the Bled Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood.

The head of the office *SSStandartenführer* MaierKaibitsch entrusted me with this task and told me to carry it out in as soon as possible and pay heed to all the main factors.

The following matters were taken into account:

262 AS 1626, box No. 1. A report on the clearing of the border strip in Upper Carniola, Bled, 13. 6. 1942. This report includes extensive lists of people affected by measures that had been taken by the Germans. Translated from German to Slovene by Niko Hudelja.

- 1) Security measures at the border primarily encompass tasks performed by the state and security police.

The responsibility for the management and formation of this border strip lies in the hands of: the Higher SS and Police Leader that is represented by *SSSturmabführer*, Councillor Opitz, and after his recall by Major *d. Sch. Kröger*; as to the border control, the command post of the *Zollgrenzschutz* (Customs Protection Guards) in Kranj, Councillor Ernst and District Customs Commissioners Loka-West, Loka-South. Šentvid ob Savi, Domžale, Litija and Šmartno pri Litiji; in matters concerning the border police, the Commander of Security Police and Security Service at Bled, *SS-Obersturmbannführer* Volckenborn; as to the technical execution, the Fortress Office South-East, Lieutenant Colonel Hennig; as to the delimitation and the demarcation of the border, the German-Italian Central Border Commission and its Subcommissions.

- 2) The security measures call for firm actions in the national and state-political sense, for which the following are in charge: the Nazi Party or the district party leader Kuß in Kranj and a party member in Kamnik, for Upper Carniola Dr Hradetzky, district party leader, and the RFSSRKF office at Bled in the matters of Main Department I (Human Deployment), *SSStandartenführer* Meier – Kaibitsch; *Referent* of head of the civil administration of Upper Carniola, Higher Councillor Dr Hierzegger, Councillors Dr Skalka in Kranj and Dr Dujak in Kamnik, as well as municipal commissioners (professional mayors) in all participating border municipalities (11).
- 3) Finally, to complete this task, certain economic factors must also be taken into consideration, which involve the Main Department IV (Agriculture) of the RFSSRKF office at Bled, Ing. Gayl or his permanent deputy Sauer, Main Department LII (Economy), Dr Jaklin, and Main Department V (Law), Dr Maierschitz.

Having listed numerous participating services, I had to address the following important questions:

- 4) It is clearly evident from the opinions of the aforementioned actors (district leaders, provincial councillors, the RKF, the Commander of the Security Police and Security Service) that the resettlement of respective inhabitants of the border strip is a key political operation and that these people are to be treated as protégés of the Reich and that this operation is to be clearly distinguished from that of punitive expulsion; cash payments or compensations had to be offered immediately for different rights – even before the detachment [of resettled people] in order to limit politically unfavourable

consequences. Different prudent and careful preparations were necessary to factor in these requirements in order to limit the political consequences of the introduction [of the border strip] as much as possible and to carry them out intransigently and in the shortest time.

- 5) Particular attention had to be paid to a swift and faultless listing of estates whose removal was necessary following the harmonized findings of all actors from that were in item 1) characterized as being key; additionally, attention had to be paid to an expedited completion of the general resettlement and the expedited demolition of vacant estates, in which a large number of labourers had to be involved.
- 6) I took it on as my particular task to complete this assignment with a minimum number of co-workers and communications but in a manner that is as organized and as meticulous as possible, demonstrating a respectable display of German efficiency to the resettled population and to uninvolved bystanders.

II Preparatory activities

Having been given the task at hand, I immediately asked the representative of the Customs Border Commission, Higher Councillor Luhn from the Main Surveying Department XIV in Vienna, to come to Bled; along with him and Councillor Opitz, we clearly defined the width of the border strip, using a border-zone map and documents of the *Zollgrenzschutz* and of the *Gendarmerie*, as well as the area of eligible estates. Concurrently, we contacted district leaders and provincial councillors and produced a wall newspaper about the measures at hand in cooperation with the Propaganda Office. Finally, we devised a general plan for the execution of the operation in question and about detailed deadlines with respect to specific sections (timeline); we reported about this to *SS-Gruppenführer* Rösener and *SSStandartenführer* MaierKaibisch. They approved this organizational plan. Additional talks and harmonizations were followed by the production of extensive lists; the following was envisaged in the general plan: Ad item I, 1): The inspection of the border with *SSSturmbannführer* Opitz in order to define specific problematic structures that must be removed, if this can be established on location. The identification of special measures (e.g. non-removal if particular conditions are met) in collaboration with the *Zollgrenzschutz*, State Police and Security Service.

Ad item I, 2): To alleviate political consequences and strengthen the sense of a general legal security, I decided to implement Regulation No 87 (Dispossession Regulation) issued by head of the civil administration on 14 August 1941 and, additionally, to invite the entire affected municipal population to the municipal office; in the presence of the participating bodies (*Zollgrenzschutz*, State Police and Security

Service, municipal commissions, local farmers, etc.) the reasons were presented to them once again in the municipal office; this was followed by a separate appointment for each individual.

- a) Owners of estates that could remain on their estates without objections were given a suitable warning and were let go (estates situated more than 200 metres away from the border).
- b) Owners of estates situated within or immediately next to the 200-metre border area were, in principle, informed about their resettlement. The distance of 200 metres from the border was significantly exceeded only in a few cases, where the estates' position precluded direct control or the necessary proceedings were already conducted by the *Zollgrenzschutz*, State Police or Security Service.
- c) In the case of a few estates that were situated immediately next to the 200-metre strip and whose owners conducted themselves impeccably thus far and would be unable to till their high-quality land after the resettlement, their owners were allowed to stay provided that necessary conditions were fulfilled (shifting paths, entrances, installing a fence immediately next to the house that would function as an obstacle preventing escapes and marking the border area, which would be accessible only in the daytime in order to work the land, which would be reported in advance to the *Zollgrenzschutz*, etc.)

In view of the short time span available to us according to the aforementioned timeline, the deadlines were set very meticulously; it was key to conduct the proceedings in a manner that would leave no grounds for complaints; additionally, based on the records of the Security Service that included a political and racial assessment, only nationally, politically and economically fitting families were allowed to stay on their estates. The affected individuals have the opportunity to express their wish for complete or partial compensation.

To this end, a second appointment was envisaged precisely one week after the first one to determine if the affected people would be relocated to the nearby areas and retain their land in full or in part or if they would be resettled in new areas or would not be recompensed at all. While clearing the area at hand, particular attention was paid to the removal of cottagers by no longer offering land tenure to these people, they were merely registered at the Labour Department for follow-up activities.

Ad item I, 3): A special cooperation with Economic Departments III (Economy) and IV (Agriculture) was required due to the price evaluation of the abandoned farms or due to the replacement of confiscated farms that were granted to the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood.

Long deadlines were envisaged in the timeline for these activities. By evaluating the price of the abandoned and that of the replacement farm, no significant differences should occur.

To ensure a uniform price evaluation, it had to be conducted according to the guidelines defined by a single appraiser.

Ad Item I, 4): It would be advisable to implement these measures in collaboration with the local municipalities and envisage a pace that would protect the affected people from critical situations and difficulties; a one-week deadline must be ensured for the preparation of the resettlement; additionally, the resettlement must be well organized in order to prevent any delay, even the shortest one; the owners would be allowed to use materials that were fit for further use if their male family members participated in the demolition and similar measures, which have a positive psychological effect, were introduced.

Ad item I, 5): To ensure the resettlement and demolition of numerous structures, I envisaged neighbourly assistance provided by the entire municipality, offering teams of pack animals and additional hands.

Ad item I, 6): It was envisaged that all the work would be carried out only by my Main Department. To establish the extent of transport needed for the resettlement, the municipalities were sent a single form with each resettled individual being named, along with the volume of items that they would be taking with them (using means of transport that is common here) and the duration of transport from the mountain to the road in the valley, as well as the total number of teams of animals and men available in the municipality.

This was the state of affairs on 6 March 1942, one week after I had taken on this assignment, including written agreements with all participating services.

III. Implementation

The first and the second appointments took place in 11 municipalities within the envisaged time frame, between 17 March and 28 March 1942. Extraordinarily intensive work was required, which enabled us to keep very short deadlines because the most commonly raised and complicated questions of nationality, the estate, land tenure and rent, house numbers, etc. had to be addressed at first. Talks were held twice with 166 present owners of buildings, and key issues and decisions were recorded on forms that had been printed to this end. Primarily, we sought to convince the concerned parties who had land or relatives across the border to move in with their relatives in the Italian Province of Ljubljana and that of Gorizia. Depending on the circumstances of their case, many concerned parties were allowed to stay within the municipality and continue to work the remaining land. Particular attention was paid to individuals who partook in the World War. Each case of a potentially new resettlement to the confiscated farms in

Upper Carniola was scrutinized in detail. In a few cases the concerned parties expressed a wish to be resettled in the old district (*Altgau*) of Carinthia to be safe from the communists. Cottagers were completely removed from the border strip or its proximity.

The prerequisites for devising the resettlement plan were thus established. Unfortunately, Department IV (Agriculture) was late with the price evaluation of farms that would be removed and that of the replacement farms. Great difficulties occurred because the land register and cadastral documents, the bulk of which are kept in the Province of Ljubljana, could only be obtained with some delay and due to the concurrent resettlement to the old district not enough appraisers could be appointed. In order for the four-week delay not to put the entire operation at risk, I had to make the decision to expedite the clearing of the border strip in two sections at the same time. On the initiative of *SSGruppenführer* Rösener, the motorized unit of the Police Reserve Battalion 181 (Kranj) provided vehicles needed for the resettlement in exchange for the required fuel and the Commander of the Order Police (BdO) would provide police security if need be.

It was established during a conversation with Councillor Dr Friedl, a representative of the head of the civil administration in Klagenfurt, on 27 April 1942 that the clearing of the border strip and measures mentioned in the introduction are essentially tasks of the head of the civil administration and that he must see to it that the resources necessary for the completion of the task at hand are available; during this conversation, the fuel needed for the resettlement was ensured by the *RV-Referent*, Councillor Dr Schwalb.

Subsequently, the implementation plan was devised; it envisaged that the border strip would be divided into seven equally important sections that overlap with municipal borders. To prevent smuggling and other third-party impacts, the implementation did not occur in a spatial and temporal sequence but in a specific order that was based on other aspects as well (first in areas where bandits are less active, sections that are easier to manage in terms of training, etc.).

The entire course of the 123-km long border strip was divided into Sections A to G that would be cleared in the following order:

1. Section A (the Municipality of Žiri) and D (the Municipalities of Trata and Črni Vrh). Beginning on 7 May 1942.
2. Section C (the Municipality of Sorica) and E (the Municipalities Medvode, Šentvid ob Savi, Črna Vas and Dol). Beginning on 11 May 1942.
3. Section G (the Municipality of Šmartno pri Litiji). Beginning on 14 May 1942.
4. Section B (the Municipality of Oslica). Beginning on 18 May 1942.
5. Section F (the Municipality of Trebeljevo). Beginning on 21 May 1942.

This will be followed by compiling lists of the resettled people for each respective municipality, who will be taken to estates in Upper Carniola by police trucks, with the exact indication of the location and time of loading of goods along the road in the valley and reloading them in the new location; lists of the resettled population for each respective municipality, with an exact reference to the beginning of the resettlement and the new place of residence.

Naturally, teams of animals were included for understandable reasons if that was possible in the first place.

Finally, lists of demolishable buildings were produced that were conditionally prepared to make sure on location if the requirements were met.

It was agreed with the Main Department IV (Agriculture) with the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood and the farmers in the district that they would take care of the resettled people the moment that their respective goods are unloaded at their final destination; additionally, it was ordered that the resettled people leave all their driven livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, goats) with their neighbours, in the proximity of their old abodes, with a 10-day supply of fodder, for the agricultural bodies to be able to make a suitable decision in peace because in the majority of cases high-quality livestock stayed on confiscated farms, which enabled us to avoid inefficient high losses of livestock during droving.

Lists of goods belonging to those who were resettled to the Italian provinces were sent for verification to the Foreign Exchange Office in Vienna.

Later on, the second and final communication was sent to municipal commissioners; it contained a brief explanation of the difference between both categories of the resettled population (*Umsiedler* and *Umzügler*). By presenting lists of both categories of the resettled population (*Umsiedler* and *Umzügler*), we tasked them with the publication of the following instructions and with controlling their implementation:

- 1) The implementation in the municipal area begins on ____ at _____. Neither partial nor complete settlement may be conducted arbitrarily before that.
- 2) The resettled people must leave their livestock along with a 10-day supply of fodder with their neighbours.
(The new location of the resettled individuals was not mentioned to the municipal commissioner for understandable reasons).
- 3) Those engaging in smuggling, black-marketing or disobeying the instructions will face the severest consequences.
- 4) An advance party (*Vorkommando*) will contact the municipal commissioner one day before the beginning of the resettlement to work out the details of the implementation.

I always helmed this advance party myself, giving directions to workers and teamsters (regarding time, place and number); the relevant section was divided into the necessary number of subsections, whose operation was led by one of my co-workers; they were always accompanied by somebody from the municipality that had been appointed by the municipal commissioner and who was familiar with the area and the problematics; structures were often situated miles apart, hidden away in wooded, high-lying areas. The message centre and accommodation for my co-workers had to be pinpointed – which was anything but easy or insignificant and in which I was assisted a great deal by the *Zollgrenzschutz*, as was the case with many other matters.

This allowed for an efficient leadership of the entire operation, workers, teamsters and shifts.

The aforementioned lists were also delivered to the Commander of the Order Police (BdO), the Commander of the Security Police and Security Service (SIPO), district leaders, provincial councillors, district commissioners, as were maps of the border strip and a timetable with a detailed course of action in each settlement and services involved. My co-workers were also given a folder containing all documents and detailed instructions; additionally, a reporting point, where I could be reached, was agreed for each respective date; my presence in specific spots was required repeatedly; friction caused by the army that needed teams of animals for the resettlement had to be done away with at times, on other occasions labourers needed for demolishing buildings were needed by police patrols to fell trees, etc.

With the constant cooperation of the co-workers from my department, who often worked through their midday or evening rest, Sundays and holidays, all the preparations were completed that allowed for the operation to run meticulously.

On 6 June 1942 the progress of the operation was discussed with the mayors of Sorica, Trata, and Črni Vrh, and in the evening my co-workers became subsection leaders.

To make up for the delay caused by Department IV (Agriculture) about the price evaluation of immovable property, we had to work concurrently in two sections. To man the subsection, *Ing.* Koch, who helmed the resettlement in Ljubljana (the Bled Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood), provided me initially with three and then five experienced men, who had a command of the Slovene language.

On 7 May 1942 at 7 a.m. the resettlement began in the locations within the border strip (Section A and D), in the length of 34 km. The police trucks were exact to the second. The resettlement had been completed by noon in the majority of cases, by evening in difficult terrain, and in a mere two instances by noon the following day.

Because there were a few very large structures in both sections [sic] including barns with heavy ferroconcrete vaults on stone-built columns, work had to be done on Sunday

as well; having taken this circumstance into consideration when planning turned out very well; more than 500 men worked in both sections that Sunday (10 May 1942), following the planned training and the conversation with all subsection leaders – where experiences were exchanged and instructions amended – the remaining men were transported to new Subsections C and E. It turned out during the demolition of buildings at Črni Vrh that the Wehrmacht Construction Battalion was not informed of the operation despite the public announcement, and required a few vacant buildings for the accommodation of its men; this applies also to foresters that felled trees in the border strip at Sorica. The matter was resolved expediently after the intervention of the permanent deputy of the Higher Leader of SS and the Police in the matter of the border strip Major d. Sch. Kröger. Services wanting to use vacant structures would make a statement, by means of which they took on the task of demolishing these structures as soon as they are no longer needed and would provide the owners with usable materials, should they still be in this area, otherwise these materials would be given to municipal commissioners. When bandits armed with shotguns, machine guns and binoculars were noticed at an elevation next to the border, which is situated in the Italian area, 500 m away, observing the operation during the resettlement of a large estate, fears were raised that they would try to get their hands on the livestock. We had to ask the police and the *Zollgrenzschutz* for protection. They offered it immediately and in sufficient numbers, and thus no damage was caused. Meticulous work performed by the municipal secretary of Trate and that by the mayors of Črni Vrh and Trate deserves particular mention. Even though the Italian area to the south of Črni Vrh saw fierce battles being fought with bandits in these days and strong forces were needed at the border that were provided by the police, the *Zollgrenzschutz* and the *Wehrmacht*, the work was completed and resources found in a flawless cooperation of commands and my subsection leaders, which enables us to continue to employ hundreds of labourers in the demolition.

Structures (e.g. hayracks owned by the parish priest at Polhov Gradec) belonging to landowners on the other side of the border were quickly demolished and delivered to the border; intermediaries told the owners to collect their belongings there.

Work in both sections had been completed by the evening of 11 May 1942, with a total of 132 people being resettled and 50 structures demolished.

On 11 May 1942 at 7 a.m. the clearing in Sections C (the Municipality of Žiri) and E (the Municipalities of Medvode, Šentvid ob Savi, Črni Vrh and Dol) began in a total length of 37 km.

The preparations and almost completely single-handed implementation by the Črni Vrh municipal commissioner were flawless in every respect; on the other hand, the resettlement in Šentvid was a difficult one. The peripheral settlement of Poljane, which lies immediately next to the border, was not resettled on the condition that each owner commits to selling their house to the office of the Higher Governor of

Finance in Graz as soon as they are told to; a string of buildings that are yet to be demolished thus remained alone in one part of the settlement of Podgora. With everybody being very busy working at Šentvid ob Savi, that the municipal commissioner managed to gather a few people, even though the operation should have been carried out there – under the watchful eye of everybody in Ljubljana, so to speak – was particularly exemplary.

The municipal commissioner did not comply with the demand to summon people from other parts of Šentvid ob Savi as well. Following an intervention with the provincial councillor in Kranj, nine people showed up instead of previous 13, half of whom were very old and the other half with a doctor's certificate showing an inability to work. Therefore I decided to ask the mayors of Medvode and Smlednik to provide us with available labourers; in two and a half days the police trucks transported a total of 90 men from these municipalities to work.

The exemplary organization of the resettlement and demolition in the Municipality of Žiri, which stood in stark contrast to that in Šentvid ob Savi, deserves particular mention; the organization of the workforce in the Municipality of Dol was excellent, as well. Difficulties occurred at Črna Vas and Dol because the Italian side refused to allow the resettled people, whom we allowed to leave, to cross the border, in a few cases also because the Foreign Exchange Office in Vienna had removed the resettled population's goods from the list. It was only after persistent correspondence that I managed to have these removals cancelled.

The only accident happened during works at Šentvid pri Savi (a severe injury caused by a fall from a roof).

A total of 139 people were resettled and 68 buildings demolished in both sections.

On 14 May 1942 work was begun in Section G (the Municipality of Šmartno pri Litiji) in a length of 15 km and on difficult terrain. Owing to threats made to the demolition men by various refugees on the other side of the border, we had to ask for police protection in two locations, which was granted immediately and prevented any subsequent incidents.

A misunderstanding was caused by a teletype message from Bled that was intended for the municipal office at Šmartno v Tuhinjski Dolini but was sent to Šmartno pri Litiji instead due to the typical situation in the postal service; the resettlement to Šmartno v Tuhinjski Dolini was cancelled in the teletype message; Slovene clerks at Šmartno pri Litiji understood that the clearing of the border strip had been cancelled until further notice; I learnt this piece of news half an hour after this message had been delivered to the post office at Šmartno pri Litiji, in a location that was 7 km away.

Following a thorough house search conducted the previous evening, three additional families fled from the hamlet of Osrednek.

A total of 67 people were resettled and 67 buildings demolished in this section.

On 18 May 1947 at 7 a.m. the clearing of Section B (the Municipality of Oslica) began, which extends in a 19-km long strip on very difficult terrain along the border. Work, which had been very well prepared by the municipal commissioner, went well here.

There were 124 people resettled and 42 buildings demolished.

On 20 May 1942, in accordance with the plan, I set off for introductory talks at Trebljevo to prepare the clearing of Section F in a length of 18 km on very difficult terrain. I took the Šmartno pri Litiji district commissioner with me, as well as a few men from the *Zollgrenzschutz*, and he asked for additional support troops because of the incursion of bandits. Half way through our journey we were caught in crossfire and all we could do was load the injured and postpone the clearing of this section until further notice.

It was not until 2 June 1942 that the situation allowed for the beginning of the clearing to take place, which was concluded with the utmost effort of everybody involved on Sunday, on the evening of 7 June 1942. The conditions were extraordinarily difficult here in every respect because labourers had to be brought in under great pressure from the most remote hamlets of the municipality (three and four hours away), with the tasks of the Construction Battalion overlapping with mine at all times; with the exception of finding bandits' observation instruments in the abandoned houses and ammunition in other buildings, no incidents occurred during the work that was accomplished by overcoming great difficulties.

Subsequently, a few families asked for permission to leave for the Province of Ljubljana due to their relatives, which I allowed immediately.

There were 100 people resettled and 60 buildings demolished.

The task was completed exactly according to the plan.

Lists of new places of residence had to be compiled and other circumstances relating to the resettled population recorded, abstracts of minutes had to be produced for provincial councillors; for administrative and technical reasons, the provincial councillors are now to issue dispossession decrees for the transfer of estates, houses, buildings and other property rights that were carried out on the basis of decisions and agreements made during the discussions and for which no complaints were filed.

To this end, other documents produced by Mr Schmidt (the Bled Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood) and his co-workers with great skill and diligence will be available to provincial councillors (appraisal reports for abandoned and newly obtained estates, the related land registry records). It must be taken into consideration that these documents were obtained almost exclusively from courts and cadastral offices in the Province of Ljubljana under particular circumstances and through special connections – work that can be appreciated only by experts that are very familiar with the difficulties associated with it.

In doing so, we followed the instruction given by head of the civil administration on 26 May 1942, No. S.K.4177 and enabled the provincial councillors to start compensation pay-outs as soon as possible.

Particular thanks is given to the services and representatives of the *Zollgrenzschutz*, whose versatile assistance and support contributed significantly to the smooth running of the operation, as well as to units of the Security Police, particularly the Commander of the Police Reserve Battalion 1818 Kranj, Major Kernbach and his leader of the transport unit Captain Sch. Scher and his men, who are credited with exceptional punctuality and helped us in many difficult situations, and whose willingness to help the resettled population contributed vitally to the fact that the operation was carried out within the set time frame.

A summary of the operation:

- 1) Resettled were: estates buildings people
 - a) with buildings being removed and land retained 19 70 11
 - b) with replacement estates granted in Upper Carniola 38 141 281
 - a) with buildings and land being removed without compensation 23 59 94
 - d) without compensation – to Italy 10 32 51
- 2) Demolished buildings:
 - a) belonging to the refugees 22 99 45
 - b) churches, chapels 4

A total of 112 405 590

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No political disturbance of the entire population of Upper Carniola occurred on account of the clearing; the preparations that took 58 days of intensive work proved to be useful and sufficient; two co-workers were present at all times during the preparations, with up to six male or female co-workers occasionally being present from my department. Barring two plans that contained the necessary lists and census lists, the correspondence was limited to two memorandums sent to the municipalities, as well as a few others addressed to the involved services. With the constant participation of three co-workers from my department and up to five from *Ing. Koch's* group (for two weeks) and the use of an automobile and a driver (the Bled Office of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood) the following was conducted:

30 truck transports
 2,056 transports by teams of pack animals
 6,717 work shifts

Within 21 days there were
 590 people resettled and
 405 buildings demolished, with the preservation of the usable materials.
 The commitment of all clerks and co-workers allowed for the completion of work.
Bled, 13 June 1942

Dipl. Ing. Nimpfer is responsible for the accuracy of the transcript
Weimann

RFSS = *Reichsführer SS*

RKF = *Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*

CdZ = *Chef der Zivilverwaltung*

SIPO = *Sicherheitspolizei*

SD = *Sicherheitsdienst*

Pg. = *Parteigenosse*

BdO = *Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei*

Kommissar f. d. F. d. V. = *Kommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*

Major d. Sch. ???

RVReferent ???

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[hrani: Zemljepisni muzej Geografskega inštituta Antona Melika ZRC SAZU]

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