

ILLEGAL MIGRATION FROM THE CROATIAN PART OF ISTRIA FROM 1945 TO 1968

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ABSTRACT

Illegal Migration from the Croatian Part of Istria from 1945 to 1968

The author analyses illegal emigration from the Croatian part of Istria from the end of World War II to the late 1960s. The migrations mentioned in the article came to light through oral histories and a small number of archives. Immediately after 1945 the illegal migrations were the result of the political and economic situation, but later the reasons were primarily economic. The author notes that the exodus and the illegal immigration are two processes which were taking place independently of each other. He also points out that there is very little written or oral material about illegal immigration before the beginning of the 21st century. There is also no literature on this topic and the archives remain unexplored.

KEY WORDS: illegal migration, Istria, phases of illegal migration, oral history

IZVLEČEK

Ilegalne migracije iz hrvaškega dela Istre med letoma 1945 in 1968

Avtor v članku obravnava ilegalno izseljevanje iz hrvaškega dela Istre od konca druge svetovne vojne do konca šestdesetih let 20. stoletja. Migracije, ki jih v članku obravnava s pomočjo metode ustne zgodovine in jih dopolnjuje z maloštevilnim arhivskim gradivom, so bile po letu 1945 posledica političnega in ekonomskega stanja, pozneje pa so prevladovali predvsem ekonomski motivi. Opozarja, da je treba razlikovati med eksodusom in ilegalnim izseljevanjem, dvema procesoma, ki sta se odvijala neodvisno eden od drugega. Poudari, da se je o ilegalnem izseljevanju vse do začetka 21. stoletja zelo malo govorilo in pisalo, prav tako o tej temi ni literature, neraziskano pa je tudi arhivsko gradivo.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: ilegalne migracije, Istra, faze ilegalnih migracij, ustna zgodovina

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of World War II, the Iron Curtain divided Europe into two separate parts, the Eastern and the Western Bloc. In those times, if one wanted to leave Yugoslavia one had to escape. Illegal migrations from Istria and Yugoslavia occurred from the end of World War II and became increasingly frequent until the late nineteen sixties. They continued after this period as well, but on a much smaller scale (Radić 1999; Šarić 2005; Karakaš Obradov 2013).

The written material on illegal migration is very sporadic. Apart from being a focus of demographers (Laušić 1990; Žerjavić 1993; Crnković 1994; Nejašmić 2003) and ethnologists (Nikolić 2010), illegal migration from Istria is also mentioned in several literary and documentary texts and memoirs. The problem of the illegal emigration of the Italian, Croatian and Slovene population from Istria in the period from 1945 to 1968¹ has not been given serious treatment by Croatian historiographers. The escapes of Istrian residents are mentioned in the works of historians Darko Dukovski (2001), Marino Manin (2010) and Marica Karakaš Obradov (2013), but the topic of the illegal departures was more fully dealt with only by Tanja Šarić (2005), who specified the causes and methods of fleeing Croatia after World War II. Approximately twenty stories about illegal departures were also compiled by Ivan Pauletta (2005) in *Bjegunci*.

Slovenian historian Jernej Vidmar (2015) worked on the subject of illegal departures from the Tolmin and Nova Gorica region in Slovenia, touching upon the Slovenian part of Istria as well, and also relied on various oral testimonies. Urška Strle (2014) also described the illegal migration from the Soča valley through oral history. Several oral testimonies about illegal migrations were also published by Gloria Nemeč (2012). Illegal migrations in Italian historiography are mentioned in the context of the exodus, especially during the so-called "black exodus", towards the end and just after the conclusion of World War II (Pupo 2005, 2015; Ferrara, Piancola 2012), while the subject of illegal departures after the 1950s is mentioned by Raul Pupo (2007: 187) and Orietta Moscarda Oblak (2016: 370–372).

It's also worth mentioning an article written by the historian Radmila Radić (1999), in which she analysed the migrations of national minorities in Yugoslavia in the 1950s and classified the emigrants by time categories, illegal emigration being the fourth category called post-war emigration, however she does not distinguish it from legal emigration, although she does take it into consideration. In conclusion, the scientifically based, reliable and, if it's even plausible, total number of defections, whether from Istria, Croatia or Yugoslavia, has not been established to this day. The data differs from author to author, while archival documents, still largely unexplored, do not offer complete statistics.

1 Sporazum između Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije i Savezne Republike Njemačke o socijalnom obezbeđenju, <https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/files/doc/PIO/sporazumi/Nemacka.pdf> (3. 1. 2018).

The main goal of this article is to use the oral history method to try to reconstruct the methods of illegal departures from the Istrian region and to analyse the motives of these defections in the time frame from 1945 to 1968 in the context of the political and economic circumstances which serve as the main factors for the observed phenomenon.

The respondents, in their personal stories taken with a time delay of fifty years, are very subjective. In their stories, they are bound to a space and time in which it is difficult to discern the political, economic and other motives for escaping. The reasons for escaping are supplemented with the personal experiences of the respondents.

Illegal emigration from Istria from the end of World War II to the late sixties is oftentimes mislabelled with the term exodus, i.e. the departure of the Italian population from Istria, as well as Rijeka, Zadar and other parts of Dalmatia. However, these are two parallel processes that overlap in the period in question. In this paper I will not be addressing the exodus of Istrian inhabitants nor the other mass migrations in the legal spectrum, but will focus exclusively on illegal migrations of the Istrian population from the end of World War II until the end of the 1960s.

The term illegal migration primarily corresponds to illegal (irregular) entry into a foreign country by bypassing border control. This term also applies to people who entered a foreign country legally but afterwards remained there without appropriate permits and documents (Mesić 2002). This article will not focus on the latter method (legal entry and then remaining in the country) but on situations when people crossed the state border illegally (bypassing border control) and thus escaped from their country of origin.

In the article I mention encounters with various categories of respondents² who were directly or indirectly associated with the escape process. We can also divide the fugitives into several categories:

- Fugitives who lived in Istria;
- Fugitives who moved to Istria because of work and later fled;
- Fugitives who came to Istria in order to escape more easily.

The very differences between the viewpoints of these escaping eyewitnesses will serve to prove or reject the hypothesis that illegal migration from Istria included groups of people of different national and political views, while the economic factor of seeking a better life could represent a common motive for leaving Istria.

2 We can classify them into the following groups: a) Directly associated with the escape process: People who succeeded in their first (or later) attempt to escape, people who were caught fleeing and no longer attempted to do so, people who gave up at the very attempt of fleeing, people whose family member(s) managed to escape, people who transferred others over the border for their own material or other gains, people who denounced fugitives, people serving the state (army and police) whose job was to prevent cross border escapes. Italian fishermen who aided the fugitives lost at sea and b) Indirectly associated with the escape process: Residents of border areas who were witnesses of successful and unsuccessful escapes, and contemporaries of the above mentioned people.

Subsequently, it's quite plausible that illegal migration as a complex phenomenon cannot be observed unilaterally. The reliability of the information obtained in the field was examined methodologically through multiple interviews through the presence of a third person, and through individual and collective memory.

PHASES OF ILLEGAL EMIGRATION

Because of the complexity of the phenomenon I have divided the illegal migration from Istria into four phases. I based this classification on an analysis of previous academic insights gained using archival material, but above all I based it on the conclusions gained through the analysis of oral history.

The first phase of illegal migration refers to the period from the end of World War II in May 1945 to the election of the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia in March 1950. There were two important factors that played a crucial role in illegal emigration. The first is the emergence of opportunities to emigrate (optate) through options and the second is the political consequences of the Cominform³ Resolution i.e. conflicts with Cominform supporters. With regard to people's motives for escape, the first phase of illegal migration can be divided into two parts:

- a) Immediately after the end of World War II in May 1945 until the signing of the Cominform Resolution in June 1948.
- b) From the Cominform Resolution in June 1948 until the district elections in March 1950. It's interesting to see that these emigrations through options gave strong momentum to illegal emigration (Dukovski 2001).

The second phase of illegal emigration follows from 1950 until the end of 1954 i.e. until the signing of the London Memorandum⁴ and the abolition of the Free Territory of Trieste. This phase is characterized by a legal exodus of the Italian and Slavic population, with the emigration through options coming to a halt, although it continued through the release of Yugoslav citizenship (ibid.). The second phase of illegal migration can also be divided into two parts:

- a) After the elections of 1950 until the Anglo-American announcement in October 1953. (Sluga 2001).
- b) From October 1953 to October 1954 when the Free Territory of Trieste was abolished.

3 *Informbiro*, <http://proleksis.lzmk.hr/27991/> (3. 1. 2018).

4 *London Memorandum*, <http://www.istrapedia.hr/hrv/98/londonski-memorandum/istra-a-z/> (2. 1. 2018).

The third and, perhaps, most dynamic phase of illegal emigration begins in 1955, when the international border between Yugoslavia and Italy is established and the strict control of the border starts loosening. This phase ends with the signing of the Udine Treaty in October 1962 (Cecotti 2005).

The fourth phase refers to the period between 1963 and the application of the Udine Treaty until October 1968, when the Federal Republic of Germany and the SFRY signed an economic agreement on the exchange of workers. Illegal emigration does not come to an end here, however it is much less pronounced than in the previous decades, and the historical circumstances are rather different than before as well.

POST WAR PERIOD – THE FIRST PHASE OF ILLEGAL EMIGRATION

Towards the end of World War II, the Yugoslav Army commenced military operations in order to liberate the country, as well as the occupation of the territory of the Kingdom of Italy, which was annexed through the Treaty of Rapallo (Dukovski 2005) after World War I, even though the Italian population in that territory was a minority. At the beginning of May 1945 military units of the Yugoslav Army entered all Istrian towns and, by finally entering Trieste, reached the ultimate goal of capturing the territory which was later to be the subject of negotiations about the change of borders at the expense of Italy.

With the signing of the Devin Agreement on July 10th 1945 the Julian March (which geographically refers to the territory of the Italian provinces along with the provincial seats of Gorica, Trieste, Rijeka and Pula) was divided into zones A and B which were separated by the so-called Morgan line, named after the British general who led the negotiations with the Yugoslav army about demarcation. Zone A was made up of the areas west of the Soča, and Trieste and Pula with its surroundings, and the area was governed by the Allied Military Administration. Zone B, i.e. the rest of Istria and the Slovenian hinterland, was governed by the Yugoslav Army (VUJA).

According to the Treaty of Peace with Italy between the FNRJ and the Republic of Italy signed in Paris on 10th February 1947, a major part of the Julian March came under Yugoslav rule, while a smaller part (Gorica and lower Posočje) was transferred to Italy, and the remaining territories were incorporated into a new independent state called the Free Territory of Trieste, which contained 736 km² and was divided into two areas: Zone A (Trieste and its surroundings from Devin to Milj, 220 km²) and Zone B (Buje and Koper districts, 516 km²). Zone A was governed by the Anglo-American Military Administration, and Zone B by the Yugoslav Army (VUJA). Civilian authorities were acting under its administration (Dukovski 2003: 175).

In 1948 there was a clash between the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its leadership and the Communist Party of the USSR, with which the other European communist parties were aligned. Many people got hurt that conflict, mostly just

ordinary people who were members of the Communist Party and couldn't just give up on what they, as communists, had strongly believed in their whole lives (Simić Trifunović 1990; Bobinac 2017; Giuricin 2017).

Apart from the intricate political situation, it was necessary to rebuild destroyed houses, renew industrial capacities, and to restore the economy in general. Supplying the population with the most basic foodstuffs also turned out to be a major problem. Illegal migrations began immediately after World War II and blended with the exodus of the Italian population from Pula before the Anglo-American Administration was replaced by the Yugoslav administration. In the first phase of illegal migration, the reasons for fleeing were diverse, from both the political and economic perspectives (Dukovski 2001: 222). According to the memories of M. P., several of whose family members fled from their homeland, there were no real reasons for escaping:

Vinko didn't have to escape ... I don't know why he left. During the war, he sometimes worked as a truck driver for the Germans (for the Todt Organization author's note), and then he got scared, I guess he feared he'd be killed or sent to jail. One day he just disappeared. He was gone for a month and then he just called from Italy. Said he'd left for Argentina. That was in 1946. In those times it was quite awful. (Dukovski 2001)

The fear of "liberators" and threats sent to her father and uncle (her father and uncle were on two occasions taken to interrogations where they were threatened – author's note) were reason enough for Anamarija Crasti – back then a little girl and later an Italian reporter – to flee with her mother Benedetta in 1946, rowing from Vrsar harbour towards Italy. Her father Giovanni had left for Trieste with his brother a few days earlier. At the border crossing in Škofije he gave the police officer his entire monthly salary as a pledge to return from Trieste. A few days later he contacted his wife who then decided to flee (Crasti 2017).

Giordano P., a resident of Pula as a convinced communist from his early youth and a participant in the antifascist struggle, could not accept the situation that arose after the split with the USSR and decided to flee the country. On 4 August 1948, along with six other colleagues, he fled from Pula in a 8 meters long boat with a one-cylinder engine. Soon, they were caught up in a strong storm. It wasn't just a temporary squall – they were drenched to their bones and constantly had to bail the water out of the boat. They tried to keep the boat pointed into the waves. On the afternoon of the second day, they came across an Italian fishing vessel which towed them to Cesenatico where they arrived in the evening (Pauletta 2005: 11–19).

In the minutes of the meeting of the bureau of the District Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia for Buzet held on 23 February 1950 additional motives for fleeing can be found (poverty, the severing of the natural connection with Trieste):

The People living near Črnica are very poor. Not nearly enough was done to help them. They need to be motivated to work and given help. These parts of Slovenia belonging to this district used to go to Trieste before, and now that it has been made impossible and the traffic connections are in terrible shape, all of it has to be facilitated through cooperatives. (HR DAPA 385 KK KPH Buzet, box 2)

FROM THE ELECTION IN 1950 UNTIL THE END OF 1954 – THE SECOND PHASE OF ILLEGAL EMIGRATION

In the early 1950s Yugoslavia entered a period of alleviating the strictness of the administrative and party apparatus, as well as allowing more forms of freedom to the population. Despite all this, a part of the population remained displeased with the country's political and economic climate. The majority of the population favoured the living conditions in such a state and social order, but there were still those who could not or would not agree to life under such circumstances. The sixth congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1952 approved the new policy of socialist self-management and de-etatization, with radicalizing criticism of Stalinism and the Soviet regime and affirmation of the new course of Yugoslav politics. After that, Yugoslavia started opening up to the West, with passports being issued in larger numbers, and restrictions were also loosened on trips abroad for certain groups of people (athletes, writers, students) (Šarić 2015: 211).

By analysing the motives for escapes across the border we can conclude that the first and second phase of illegal emigrations overlap especially in escapes conditioned by the political circumstances and the Cominform Resolution. Istria experienced a very tense atmosphere, and the official authorities did not tolerate any criticism of the system:

I stayed there until I fled. In 1951 I always thought I'd go out somewhere in the big world, but I'd tell anyone why not, I'd go here and there. I wasn't content. And then one day an officer comes for me, he found out, and takes me to the barracks, where the headquarters were, tells me I rambled about this and that, but we'd fought for our freedom, hadn't we? One must think for himself and see if he wishes to go somewhere else. He wanted to take me to Raša. Many people were forced to dig coal there as a punishment. I told him: "I didn't do anything." The I asked him to let me go home, so I can tell my mother and father and take some clothes to have with me, and he let me do that. The next day, I was gone.

He escaped on 21 April 1951:

It was the 21st of April. We had a small boat which we had once found on the pier. My two friends Tilio Lorencin and Pere Čupiċ Kovaċ came along. All three of us boarded

that boat. The northern wind was blowing. We rowed towards Finera. We arrived at Finera, and I wanted to go a bit away from the coast so we don't get caught, right. As we arrived there, I hear a rumbling sound ... a motor. The police were there, waiting for us. But they didn't see us. Although the moonlight made it clear as day. Perhaps they were asleep ... Why they couldn't see us, I cannot figure out. We rowed the whole night. It started getting dark, we saw lights in Italy. And the strong wind was blowing right into us, we were exhausted already. Luckily, this one ship came towards us, Italian fishermen helped us up, they fed us and let us sleep in their beds. It was morning when we arrived in Italy. The captain of the ship invited us to his home. They called the police but we spoke Italian, since we were under Italian rule previously. (Lazarić 2008)

Potential reasons for escaping can be found in "enemy propaganda" but also in the lack of concern for the Istrian people who decided to optate:

Here in the field the attitude towards American imperialism isn't all that tense. We're receiving letters and packages from America in which they're badmouthing us, and the Committee does nothing about it. That's reason enough for optation. Neither have we done enough in our power to approach the optants. Most of them wish to go to America. We're the ones who must explain to them what America is like. We haven't explained to the masses the attitudes of democratic powers and their might led by the USSR. I believe that Draguč, Livade and Šterna are subject to Vidali's policy and the ideas of fugitives from that area who can be found in Trieste. On the other hand, when we look at how they were prevented from escaping across the border, we have to recognize they've started using a different tactic, and that tactic is not to flee but to work more on our territory. (HR DAPA 385 KK KPH Buzet, box 2)

Dramatic examples of escapes as well as the fugitive's occupational profiles were presented by comrade Luka Božanić at the meeting of the bureau of the District Committee of Communist Party of Croatia held on 2February 1950:

Comrade Božanić Luka presents the case of student Vizentin Milan from Oprtalj, who was in Ljubljana, then in time of the resolution came back home and tried to flee across the border but was captured and sentenced. Then there's also the case of an electrician, born in Zagreb and working in Buzet, who had relations with a girl who opted to Italy, after which he too attempted to escape, thinking the border crossings weren't guarded enough. He was also arrested and punished. (HR DAPA 385 KK SKH Buzet 1. 3. 3., 1950)

FROM THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE FREE TERRITORY OF TRIESTE UNTIL THE SIGNING OF THE UDINE TREATY – THE THIRD PHASE OF ILLEGAL EMIGRATION

The London Memorandum of 1954 abolished the Allied military administration in the Free Territory of Trieste, which meant that civilian management in Zone A was assumed by Italy, and in Zone B by Yugoslavia. The London Memorandum concluded a dispute over Trieste, bringing to an end the nine-year military administration over the area. Its definitiveness was confirmed by the Treaty of Osimo, which had determined the border to be exactly as it was drawn in 1954. However, from a legal and political point of view, a part of the Yugoslav-Italian border had remained undefined. During the period of twenty years (between the London Memorandum and the Treaty of Osimo), the two countries had concluded about 180 bilateral treaties, protocols and other agreements, mostly of an economic nature. The Italian side avoided general-interest agreements or those which would mention or apply to the Yugoslav part of the former Free Territory of Trieste. Thus, a sort of duality persisted in Italian politics regarding Yugoslavia.

Through the second agreement on options (the first one being in 1948) for Italian citizenships, which was accepted by the Yugoslav government in 1951, most applications for options were resolved by late 1953 when they ceased, and after that emigration through the release of Yugoslav citizenship gained momentum. This form of (legal) emigration was at its peak through 1956 and 1957, and after 1969 it ceased completely. With the discontinuation of optating and the restriction of emigration through the release of Yugoslav citizenship, through 1954 and 1955 the period of illegal emigration (fleeing across the border) intensified greatly. After the resolution of the Trieste issue, border control also grew weaker (Dukovski 2003). In those years, many people from Istria decided to flee for a variety of reasons.

Due to the requirement of military service, three young men from Premantura also decided to flee across the sea. Two young workers at the Uljanik shipyard in Pula (Rakić, Marinović) were together at the 1956 military recruitment in Pula:

When we had this military ... that was in ... somewhere in '56. Maybe July, August ... I don't even know which month anymore. I was at the front, and this ... colonel, or whatever he was, some important officer, asks me: "Do you have a brother?" and I say: "I do." "Older or younger?" I answer: "Older." "Was he in the military?" "Yes." "Which unit?" "Infantry." "Two years?" "Yes." Then he stared at me and said: "Hmmm ... 3 years of navy service." The worst part of it was that I had friends who were in the army before me and they ... they returned home because they got sick. They said: "They would only give you some water and cabbage, if you were lucky you got some rare meat." That's what they told me. And I lost all will to be in the army. (Rakić 2007)

Upon being recruited, the men from Premantura decide to flee:

But we had been planning to do it only come January next year, is what we agreed on. That's the time for us to leave, and one day we packed, bought some brandy, some bread, some salami, we had 5 litres of water, all that and we arrived at Runke. We were so fired up, adrenaline was pumping. Whoo, let's go, we're leaving. We got into that boat and left! We sailed, and sailed, and sailed on, and only in the morning, around 8–9 o'clock, when the sun started rising, we ... we already saw before, where the lights shine, you know, a roof being lit up. And so we went towards those lights. We sailed, and as we arrived we saw those were fishermen. They saw us and yelled: "Volete aiuto?" (Ita. "Do you need help?") "Si, si ...". We all knew how to speak Italian. They helped us on board and we fished with them the whole day, the same evening they put us on the mother ship and took us to Chioggia. (Rakić 2007).

In 1956 out of the total number of men called to military service from the territory of Zone B, namely 476, almost one fifth of them, more precisely 97, tried to escape, and many succeeded (Radić 1999: 149).

Some tried to escape by land as well. Miloš Jakac from Veli Mlun near Buzet, a farmer and participant in the antifascist struggle, graduated from the military school in Sarajevo and decided to flee:

First off, because of what I was looking for there, when I came back from the military, that year before I got married, I was trying to find a job but it was impossible. Because I refused, I refused to be an "aktivac" (member of a political party), is what they told me. "You could've gotten a job there!" Under the condition of joining the party. But I'd have to be a member of the communists. And I didn't want that. I could not find a job in Buzet, my girlfriend was working in Koper, in Slovenia, and that territory was under the authority of Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste. She had a job in a hospital there and usually came home, so to speak, on weekends, but only for 24 hours. Enough. And so we made a decision, me and my late wife, to leave after our wedding. And then we took a bus from Koper to the real Yugoslav-Italian border crossing in Škofije. So we decided to go there. To get across. We took a bus from Koper to the border. And then we a bit further away from the border and prepared; there was a big restaurant in the area, it's in the same place still to this day. And I said, let's go in, she didn't know where to ... Where do we go, we might get hurt. But I knew all the military tactics. And I told her: "Just hold onto me." And then I saw it; here was the border, and then a little stream flowed along, not too deep, water probably about 10 centimetres deep, and then it went uphill, and right there was an office of sorts. A police one, and then the military behind it. We waited and waited. We spent at least an hour in that restaurant. Maybe even two hours. And then we saw when the guards were switching places, I saw how the military started going out of their barracks, they came all the way here and had to cross this road, in a formation, one after

another, about 12–15 of them. They went uphill. They reach the first guard, switch, the previous one leaves and they move on to the next one, repeating the process. All the way to the top where they had switched all of the guards. And then they came back. When I saw they left, the guards came here, the first guard that was here didn't come with them but ... what was it, maybe 50 meters away from the barracks. He went straight into the barracks, and the others went uphill. And when I saw that happen, that they went uphill again, in that moment I was dead certain there was nobody else there. I took my wife's hand, "Amelija," I said, "Amelija, let's go! Right now! On the other side, there were the Italians." (Jakac 2007)

FROM THE UDINE TREATY UNTIL 1968 AND THE AGREEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY – THE FOURTH PHASE OF ILLEGAL EMIGRATION

From 1961, the level of personal liberty of the population in the sense of freedom of movement gradually started increasing, and the issuance of passports, especially after 1962, was liberalized – excluding certain groups, they were issued in larger numbers to a wider cross section of the public, and the problem of illegal escapes began to lose its importance (Šarić 2005). The Udine Treaty enabled cross-border traffic and thus reduced the problem of illegal escapes. Nevertheless, in the 1960's the Italian-Yugoslav border was made easier to cross. The number of Yugoslav citizens' border crossings increased, either for shopping or working in Italy. On the other hand, Italy's economy started developing rapidly and the need for workforce increased. Improved state relations, after a period of tension, led to the establishment of an integrated labour market at the border between Italy and Yugoslavia, which was, naturally, in the interest of both countries (Barcella, Colluci 2016).

In the second half of the 1960s, Yugoslavia signed bilateral employment agreements with France in 1965, followed by Austria, Sweden and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1968, which allowed hundreds of thousands of Yugoslav citizens to seek employment abroad and reduced the need for escape. However, in the period from 1963 to 1968, the escapes continued, albeit in fewer numbers than the previous years (Dukovski 2001: 219; Moscarda Oblak 2016: 269–272).

Zvonimir Radolović, a student from Marčana near Pula, decided to escape with two of his friends:

A lot of people escaped before us, so naturally we too started coming up with a plan ... how to get across. So we did. First time we went in '66, there was three of us, one of them is here, this Đani Buić was in Australija later, and then Korba Berto, he's in Sweden today. But I was sent back since I was underage. But by the time I returned home I had already turned 18! And so I got 20 days of jail time, I was sentenced in Koper by this ... how should I say ... judge. They eventually managed to escape across

the land: "Yes, we took a bus from Pula to Koper, and then in Koper we went on foot, waited for night to fall, otherwise you'd get stopped in Koper already, and so when night fell we walked across meadows and through woods, there wasn't so many of them but ... Across those meadows, and a small river, it must've been the Rižana, we took off our shoes and walked across, the water wasn't even up to our knees you know, and by the time we came through we must've been in Italy already, but we didn't realize that yet, we were still trying to hide, until we saw a bus passing on one of the roads, I looked at it and saw it had Italian licence plates. And that's when it dawned on us ... we were in Trieste." (Radolović 2007)

A former World War II prisoner, a participant in the antifascist struggle and a policeman by profession, Antonio Ottochian planned his escape while he was still working in the National Militia. By the order of the commander he received a transfer from Istria to the island of Ilovik:

Antonio, you're going to Ilovik. There are three idiots on that island and people run from them (two of the policemen were from Ogulin, author's note). They're very strict, even their cook ran away. If you don't discipline them ... and he added: "You're going because you know Italian."

I had met a girl there, but some trouble happened, I wanted to go all up in my uniform, without changing, to escape, but the boat broke down, it was an accident. I couldn't tell even tell her, but I was this close to killing her father since he started beating and harassing her, so I broke in and already had my gun cocked; I had a Beretta gun. And she said: "Ante, please, don't." And then he went and reported me. He said: "Do that again, and you'll never set foot in this house again, you'll be transferred."

The reasons for escaping could be of a completely private nature, as well: I got married, and it was just not working out, no matter what I did ... In 1963 I went to Italy, where my sister was. I somehow managed to get a passport through a personal connection and then in early '64, I had a friend working at Cinema Zagreb and I, well, confided in her. But, she had a friend working for the State Security Administration. So she accidentally let that information slip. And then, in December, I took my passport and went to the border, to go through. When I arrived, I was told: "You can't." And when he said that, I was in the middle of the border doing this (showing obscene gestures). The Italians were laughing like crazy. "Did you punch him, or what?" "No, no! He was gone for a second, and in that moment I managed to slip through. To the middle of the border. I knew they wouldn't shoot after that point. And now, I have to go ..." (Ottochian 2008, oral history)

CONCLUSION

Using verbal testimonies that I personally collected and two other oral histories from the literature, I have mentioned twenty-two people (nineteen men and three women) who illegally fled the country. In addition to these testimonies I have also listed three archival documents mentioning the escapes of two more men and the possible reasons for fleeing the country.

Four of them were underage (three schoolboys and a young girl), three were just about to start their military service, while the rest were mostly young people ranging from their early twenties to the late thirties. Their occupations are as follows: a housewife, a driver, shipyard workers, factory workers, hospital personnel, military personnel, police officer, schoolchildren and a university student. One of them is a convinced communist, and three are members of the anti-fascist movement.

Their reasons for fleeing were diverse: fear of revenge and the new ruling power, political disagreements because of the conflicts with the Cominform, a lack of political freedom, avoiding military service, unemployment, poverty, a desire for a better life, "enemy" propaganda, establishment of the border towards Trieste, personal reasons.

One's nationality also played a big role in the process of escaping. In the paper, I presented the testimonies of Anamaria Crasti and her mother who felt strong affiliation with the Italian nation and therefore fled. National affiliation as a main escape motive is also described in about a dozen testimonies in the work of Ivan Pauletta (2005).

Although a large number of respondents who still need to be interviewed will, upon further examination of the archival materials, give a clearer insight into the motivation of the fugitives, the results of the existing research show that there was no single motive or reason that was crucial for making the decision to illegally flee the country.

The different perspectives presented in the stories show the complexity of the illegal migrations caused by the sociopolitical situation in Istria after World War II. The individual memories cited in the text are divided into two discourses: the act of escaping itself and the reason for it. It is noticeable that in the first two phases of illegal migration the reasons for the escapes were conditioned by both political and economic circumstances in Istria, while in the next two phases of illegal migration different motives prevail, mainly since the structure of refugees from Yugoslavia changed in the mid-fifties.

In using the oral history method I wanted to describe part of the social atmosphere that prevailed in Istria during the time period in question – an atmosphere that urged Istrian people to escape. To confirm the knowledge I had gained in my field work I also used archival material, which complemented and reaffirmed these discoveries associated with escape motives, especially in the first stage of illegal migration.

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POVZETEK

ILEGALNE MIGRACIJE IZ HRVAŠKEGA DELA ISTRE MED LETOMA 1945 IN 1968

Igor JOVANOVIĆ

Ilegalno izseljevanje iz Istre je pojav, o katerem se je v hrvaškem zgodovinoписju druge polovice 20. stoletja zelo malo pisalo ali govorilo, se pa temi veliko več pozornosti posveča na začetku 21. stoletja. Prav tako je zelo malo literature, neraziskano pa je tudi arhivsko gradivo. Ilegalno izseljevanje se je pogosto označevalo kot eksodus ali pa kot njegov del. Vendar sta ilegalno izseljevanje in eksodus dva paralelna procesa, ki sta se odvijala neodvisno eden od drugega. Čeprav so se posamezne faze eksodusa in ilegalnega izseljevanja med seboj prepletale, sta oba obdržala svoje značilnosti.

Avtorjev glavni metodološki pristop za razumevanje in pojasnjevanje modalnosti in načinov ilegalnih pobegov iz Istre od konca druge svetovne vojne do konca šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja je bilo ustno izročilo. Z njegovo pomočje je opisal del takratnega družbenega vzdušja v Istri, ki je Istrane nagnalo k prebegu. Pri preverjanju spoznanj, do katerih je prišel s terenskim delom, je uporabljal tudi arhivsko gradivo, ki je dopolnilo in potrdilo pridobljena spoznanja.

V petdesetih letih, po resoluciji informbiroja, še zlasti pa v šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja, se je stanje spremenilo. Takrat je Jugoslavija izšla iz obdobja totalitarizma in se postopoma liberalizirala in demokratizirala. Zaradi postopnega odpiranja meja in liberalizacije potnih listin je bilo ponovno mogoče prečkati meje. Dejanskega števila ilegalnih prebežnikov, tako iz Istre kot iz Hrvaške ali Jugoslavije, nimamo; arhivsko gradivo je namreč nepopolno, pa tudi informacije so odvisne od posameznih avtorjev.

Avtor opaža, da so bili vzroki prvih dveh faz ilegalnih izseljevanj odvisni od političnih in ekonomskih razmer v Istri. Ker se je v drugi polovici petdesetih let struktura beguncev iz Jugoslavije spremenila, so v naslednjih dveh fazah izseljevanj prevladovali različni motivi. Ti begunci niso več okarakterizirani kot politični begunci, večina med njimi namreč ni bila povezana s politiko. Pri večini so glavni razlog za beg ekonomski motivi.

H kompleksnosti čezmejnega prebega prispeva približno deset kategorij istrskih prebivalcev, posredno ali neposredno povezanih z ilegalnimi izseljevanji. Avtor tudi te begunce deli v tri kategorije.