



SCIENCE AND RESEARCH CENTRE KOPER  
Institute for Historical Studies  
ZNANSTVENO-RAZISKOVALNO SREDIŠČE KOPER  
Inštitut za zgodovinske študije

International conference  
**ADRIATIC SOCIAL POLITICS**  
**WELFARE STATES IN A TRANSNATIONAL**  
**BORDERLAND: HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES IN**  
**COMPARISON**

Koper, 25–26 May 2022

**PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS**



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KOPER 2022

**International conference ADRIATIC SOCIAL POLITICS. WELFARE STATES IN A  
TRANSNATIONAL BORDERLAND: HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES IN COMPARISON  
Programme and Abstracts**

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# FOREWORD

## ADRIATIC SOCIAL POLITICS

### WELFARE STATES IN A TRANSNATIONAL BORDERLAND: HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES IN COMPARISON

#### **Rationale**

It is acknowledged that social protection has a long connection to various types of belonging, such as within the family, religious affiliation, town, ethnicity or state of origin. It is a relatively recent development that granting welfare has become connected to citizenship. Those living in European borderland regions have knowledge and experience regarding varied practices and alternative choices with regards to social welfare. It is the case that the historically mixed ethnic make-up of borderlands has resulted in states imposing standardizing practices which were heavily connected to granting or withholding welfare. Alternately, it is also the case that these same ethnically mixed borderland populations have been able to subvert categories of belonging by maneuvering through the systems of one or the other state to their benefit or finding other sources of social assistance.

The aim of this conference is to understand these factors from a variety of perspectives and to interpret and challenge the dominant, state-centric perspective on welfare and social politics offered by a traditional vision of power relations.

#### **Content and goals**

The conference focuses primarily on forms of continuities and changes in social politics in an area of continuous flow of states and their structures. If most of the traditional literature analyzes politics of welfare protection within one state, our aim is to examine what happens when state sovereignty over a specific territory changes relatively constantly. Works that compare several states are relatively scarce, however analyses of changing states and

their policies in a long-term perspective with welfare as the main focus are almost nonexistent.

We aim to do this by examining similarities and differences between States that have shaped the region's history: the Habsburg monarchy, the Kingdom of Italy before and during Fascist times, Nazi Germany in World War II, the Anglo-American military administration of the postwar years, Socialist Yugoslavia, Cold War Italy and independent Slovenia and Croatia. The focus on overlapping and at times competing structures of social provision will allow for the exploration of the interplays between the inclusion and exclusion in different states. Moreover, our interest is not confined to the different top-down politics of changing states, but the reception and agency of local populations to historical processes. How do states incorporate their new citizens in their welfare systems? How do local populations react?

The aim of the conference is to bring together a group of scholars working interdisciplinarily on aspects of welfare and social politics in the Adriatic space from nineteenth century Habsburg rule until the present, when the northern Adriatic is shared by Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia. In doing so it explores the "Adriatic model", where concepts of state, citizenship, territoriality, sovereignty, nationality, welfare protection and social politics are in continuous flux. Papers speak to general but interrelated aspects such as:

- Welfare and its state and non-state actors;
- Memories of Welfare (popular images, narratives, etc.);
- Intellectual traditions of Welfare;
- Concepts of Welfare in a historical perspective.



**ORGANISER:**

Science and Research Centre Koper, Institute for Historical Studies  
Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče Koper, Inštitut za zgodovinske študije

**PROGRAMME COMMITTEE:**

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Mateja REŽEK  
Dragica ČEČ  
Urška BRATOŽ  
Oskar OPASSI



# PROGRAMME

**International Conference**

**ADRIATIC SOCIAL POLITICS**

**WELFARE STATES IN A TRANSNATIONAL BORDERLAND:  
HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES IN COMPARISON**

Koper, 25–26 May 2022

**WEDNESDAY, 25<sup>th</sup> May**

**15:00–15:15**

*Opening remarks*

**Rado Pišot**, Director of the Science and Research Centre Koper

**Egon Pelikan**, Head of the Institute for Historical Studies of the Science and Research Centre Koper

**15:15–15:30**

*Introduction*

**Borut Klabjan** (Science and Research Centre Koper), Head of the research project *Adriatic Welfare States: Social Politics in a Transnational Borderland from the mid-19th until the 21st Century*

**15:30–17:00**

Chair: Borut Klabjan

**Dragica Čeč** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Mixed Systems of Welfare: Between Political, Collective and Individual Interests, Tradition and Innovation*

**Elisabetta Vezzosi** (University of Trieste): *Welfare Policies in Trieste in the Second Post War Period: A Gender Perspective*

**Igor Duda** (Juraj Dobrila University of Pula): *Social Protection and the Self-managed Local Community: Examples from Croatia and Slovenia in the 1970s and 1980s*

*Discussion*

**17:00–17:30**

*Coffee break*

**17:30–19:00**

Chair: Nancy M. Wingfield

**Urška Bratož** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *(In)ability to Work and Social Welfare in the 19th Century Istria*

**Francesco Toncich** (ERA Fellowship, University of Ljubljana): *Inside and Outside the Habsburg Public Health System: Managing Complexity within the Austrian Littoral “In the Time of Cholera”*

**Erica Mezzoli** (MSCA WeCanIt): *Neither State nor Market: Charitable Foundations in Favor of Seafarers in the Julian March at the Turn of WWI*

*Discussion*

**19:00–19:30**

*Final comments*

**Melissa Bokovoy** (University of New Mexico)

**THURSDAY, 26<sup>th</sup> May**

**9:30–10:30**

*Keynote lecture*

**Pavel Kolář** (University of Konstanz): *The Dark Sides of the Welfare State? Social Policy and Violence in the 20th Century*

**10:30–11:00**

*Coffee break*

**11:00–13:00**

Chair: Dragica Čeč

**Nancy M. Wingfield** (Northern Illinois University, Science and Research Centre Koper): *Sex and Social Politics in the Habsburg Adriatic*

**Maura Hametz** (James Madison University): *Loving Wives, Weeping Widows, and Adopted Daughters: Women's Survival Strategies in the Upper Adriatic, 1918–1924*

**Jelena Rafailović** (Institute for Recent History of Serbia): *The Influence of Habsburg Legislation on Social Policy in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia*

**Ivan Jeličić** (Institute of Political History, Budapest): *Fiume Workers' Sickness Fund in Post-imperial Transition*

*Discussion*

**13:00–15:00**

*Lunch break*

**15:00–16:30**

Chair: Maura Hametz

**Tullia Catalan** (University of Trieste): *From Fascist Assistance to Welfare: The Case of Trieste during the AMG (1945–1954)*

**Gašper Mithans** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Youth Labour Actions in Yugoslavia and Perceptions of Volunteer Work: The Micro-study of the Slovenian Youth Organisation of Koper*

**Urška Lampe** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Institute IRRIS): *Social Policy along the Italo-Yugoslav Border: The Case of the Association of Relatives of Deportees to Yugoslavia after the Second World War*

*Discussion*

**16:30–17:00**

*Coffee break*

**17:00–18:30**

Chair: Igor Duda

**Mila Orlić** (University of Rijeka): *'Tito and Christ': Welfare and the Dispute between the Yugoslav People Power and the Church in Postwar Istria*

**Radina Vučetić** (University of Belgrade): *Health and Welfare for all! Or not?: Yugoslav Internal Borders and Smallpox Epidemic 1972*

**Oskar Opassi** (Science and Research Centre Koper): *Aspects of Politics and Discourse in Border Trade Union Struggles: Comparing the 1968 General Strike in Trieste and the 1970 Work Stoppage in the Port of Koper*

*Discussion*

**18:30–19:00**

*Final comments*

**Stefan Nygård** (University of Helsinki)

## ABSTRACTS





## **MIXED SYSTEMS OF WELFARE: BETWEEN POLITICAL, COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL INTERESTS, TRADITION AND INNOVATION**

**Dragica ČEČ**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

The paper will explore how provisions for the maintenance and health of the poor changed in the framework of rapid economic and political change and how the Enlightenment concern with poor-relief and health care of the poor influenced the lives of the poor and impoverished in the second half of the 19th century. With no doubt was the interest of Habsburg state to maximise the population and to ensure its productivity. For most of the 19th century, the central principle was to support the freedom of the productive individual over other members of society, and work and self-prosperity were the dominant values of bourgeois society. At the end of the 19th century, the Monarchy accepted the idea that reforms addressing social issues were among the positive duties of the state. Gradually, from the end of the 19th century the rights of all individuals within “society” were seen as equal and as deserving of fair treatment, but some social groups remained forgotten. For decades modern scholarship concentrated on the genesis of those modern values and at the same time neglected the complex realities of the poor at the end of the 19th century. Poverty was still seen as a moral failure and consequently the poor were to be disciplined or hidden. Some social groups were forgotten and neglected. Even those who obtained some kind of support mostly depended on “mixed economy of welfare”. The secularisation of the world influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment did not drastically change the motives and beliefs regarding charity which were still based on traditional Christian charity, but to some extent also on the enlightened idea of compassion/empathy (coupled with concepts of neighbourly love and human dignity) and on prevention of risks connected with poor. How bourgeois moral values, self-interests and emotions shaped the mixed economy of welfare will be analysed in the case study of the Saint Nicolaus shelter Trieste. It reveals the complex ideas about welfare attitudes towards the “forgotten” and neglected group of professional domestic servants in Trieste during the time when the welfare state and ideas of basic human rights were begin-

ning to be established. At the same time, the idea and practise of this social institution also answers the role of the women's movement in the process of generating social reforms and social rights.

## **WELFARE POLICIES IN TRIESTE IN THE SECOND POST WAR PERIOD: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE**

**Elisabetta VEZZOSI**

*University of Trieste*

From the beginning of the 1990s, research on the social policy experience of the early twentieth century gave rise to a new historiographical paradigm, the maternalist paradigm, which has been re-examined and redefined from the perspective of gender-based concepts of citizenship, poverty, social rights, and politics. The category of gender thus became a fundamental element for re-reading the history of the welfare state, while the action of women's movements was identified as a fundamental stimulus for the development of national welfare policies and measures aimed at supporting maternity and childhood.

The comparative and, more recently, transnational perspective, the transition from a male breadwinner to the dual breadwinner model and the transition between different national political regimes has drawn attention to the post-war period.

Within this framework, the welfare policies of the Allied Military Government, although marked by contradictions, are a good case history. The role of foreign experts (often female), the international exchange of foreign experiences in the period from 1945 to 1954, and the new professionalization of women in social work, outline a deep transformation of the pre-existing welfare structure showing the way for a new model of welfare state, social justice, gender equality and democratic citizenship.

## **SOCIAL PROTECTION AND THE SELF-MANAGED LOCAL COMMUNITY: EXAMPLES FROM CROATIA AND SLOVENIA IN THE 1970S AND 1980S**

**Igor DUDA**

*Juraj Dobrila University of Pula*

The new Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 created the framework for a more visible and active local community (Cro. *mjesna zajednica*, Slo. *krajevna skupnost*), i.e. a unit on the sub-municipal level organised in city quarters, larger villages or groups of villages in which neighbours were expected to cooperate and participate in decision making on the basis of solidarity, common needs and interests. This approach was in line with the system of social self-management and associated labour, as well as the idea of direct socialist democracy. The number of local communities grew until the early 1980s. There was an increase in their involvement in planning and acting in various fields including social standards, social protection and welfare. The agenda included the construction of public facilities like kindergartens, schools, medical and cultural centres, sports grounds, water supply and phone lines. Different bodies and organisations were also in charge of childcare, consumer protection or war veterans. Archival records of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia reveal how the system was designed and how it functioned, while the specialised monthly magazine *Mjesna zajednica* published reports from all parts of the country, including Croatian and Slovenian local communities in the Northern Adriatic and its hinterland.

## **(IN)ABILITY TO WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE IN 19TH CENTURY ISTRIA**

**Urška BRATOŽ**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

Social groups to which welfare measures were mainly addressed during the 19th century until the First World War were numerous and diverse, including children (orphans), women (widows in particular) who had been left without sources of income, as well as unemployed workers, but especially those who were still conceptualized as the ‚deserving poor‘, incapable of work and completely dependent on some type of assistance.

In this paper we will focus on the ‚system‘ of social protection (or more likely, dispersed welfare measures) which can be observed in the Austrian Littoral, with a special emphasis on those in need who were unable to work (e.g. the sick, elderly, etc.) and had access to rather selective institutional care. On the other hand, there were people in need who were able to earn their own living, but in certain moments of crisis may have faced the risk of poverty (especially during economic crises, epidemics, poor harvests, etc.). These received at most occasional (temporary) support; in addition to local authorities, these forms of assistance were often provided by private (civil) initiatives (although to a limited extent).

Over the course of the ‚long‘ 19th century, socially vulnerable groups were thus largely dependent on (public and private) charity embedded in bourgeois moral codes. In 1845, Carlo Combi, at the time head of the Institute for the Poor in Trieste, wrote a report to the local authorities, summarizing the mentality of the Triestine merchant elite, which expressed the widespread discourse on the pauperization of (urban) society and the idea of »educating and moralizing as the key task of philanthropy and charity«. These ideas were part of wider morally and economically grounded discourses on work, on the right to social assistance, the fight against idleness and the need to educate the lower classes, as well as of a rhetoric associated with the centralization of the public charity system.

## **INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE HABSBURG PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM: MANAGING COMPLEXITY WITHIN THE AUSTRIAN LITTORAL “IN THE TIME OF CHOLERA”**

**Francesco TONCICH**

*ERA Fellowship, University of Ljubljana*

One of the most significant consequences of the year 1848 within the Habsburg Monarchy was the promulgation of the “*Heimatrecht*”, considered to be the first form of Austrian citizenship. Declared within the broader constitutional reform of 1849, this legal institute provided a basic statal protection – such as assistance for indigent subjects. However, it worked through a complex, exclusively administrative system of cultural and territorial belongings, the so-called “Pertinency”. The function of the *Heimatrecht* was strongly interconnected with the contemporary work of standardising censuses by the Central Office for the Administrative Statistics in (re)shaping culturally intricate but often mixed local societies into clearer (modern) national categories. Such multifaceted work of re-ordering the relationships between statal institutions and local populations also happened through administrative practices of welfare policies. This system of establishing civil rights and ensuring basic social protection were based both on cultural/national and territorial identifications. However, controversy arose when those prerequisites did not match, above all in imperial provinces characterised by an internal cultural and socioeconomic diversity and mobility, such as in the Austrian Littoral. This paper aims to investigate the inclusion and exclusion resulting from this new relationship between the identification of local populations, their needs, and the new imperial administrative system. As a case study, it analyses the public health structures and systems of the Austrian Littoral in the second half of the 19th century. Focusing principally on documents from the Lieutenancy of the Littoral, it takes into account administrative practices of the inclusion and exclusion of individuals or groups between Trieste/Trst/Triest and Istria/Istra/Istrien during outbreaks of epidemics – such as cholera and malaria –, between public and private/self-organised structures of protection and care of the needy.

**NEITHER STATE NOR MARKET: CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS  
IN FAVOR OF SEAFARERS IN THE JULIAN MARCH  
AT THE TURN OF WWI**

**Erica MEZZOLI**  
*MSCA WeCanIt*

The communication aims to elucidate the characteristics, evolution and methods of action of the “Third sector’s” seafaring institutions in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the first years of Italian administration in the North-Eastern Adriatic region following the First World War.

Thus far entirely ignored by the research, alongside working and business activities, the charitable foundations were the third pillar on which the entire maritime sector of the Upper and Eastern Adriatic rested.

For many reasons, the seafarer’s job was a “high-risk” profession which exposed both the worker and his – in most cases seafarers were male – family to the risk of poverty. It was common to turn to some charitable foundation during one’s working life, and it became necessary when one stopped working due to old age. As for seafarers’ families, seeking help from this kind of institution was almost an unavoidable fact in the event of the death of the head of the household.

In addition to examining the operating principles of the most important *Pio Fondo di Marina*, the communication will also encompass those smaller and with less significant assets charitable foundations with less significant assets, especially in their assistance activities in favour of seafarers’ families (i.e., widows and orphans).

## **SEX AND SOCIAL POLITICS IN THE HABSBURG ADRIATIC**

**Nancy M. WINGFIELD**

*Northern Illinois University  
Science and Research Centre Koper*

In this talk, I analyze continuity and change in the treatment of prostitutes, both registered and clandestine, for venereal disease (sexually transmitted infections) in the Habsburg Adriatic. I argue that the increasing tension between police and physicians over who should be in charge of regulating prostitution—and how— from the fin de siècle through the early 1920s influenced both prewar and postwar states and their policies. Neo-regulation, which gave physicians greater authority in how prostitutes were treated for venereal disease, also gave these women themselves some agency in their treatment against the background of an expanding state welfare program.



**LOVING WIVES, WEEPING WIDOWS, AND ADOPTED DAUGHTERS:  
WOMEN'S SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN THE UPPER ADRIATIC,  
1918–1924**

**Maura HAMETZ**

*James Madison University*

This paper will focus on the ways in which women maneuvered to define and redefine themselves to access social benefits and welfare opportunities in the transition from the Habsburg provinces to Liberal Italy and Fascist Italy. Dependent citizenship, which deprived women of independent legal rights, forced them to frame relations to the state and welfare officials in terms of their familial status and social relationships. In the years immediately following World War I, women who had relied on Habsburg subsidies, benefits, and pensions (generally connected to their husbands' or fathers' service) were forced to justify their needs in Italy and vis-à-vis the Italian state. Women sought to gain their footing and the approval of authorities in a world in which criteria for state acceptance and eligibility for social benefits were constantly shifting. Specifically, the paper will examine the ways in which criteria for belonging and eligibility for benefits shifted from legalistic, treaty-based requirements (birth, place of origin, place and time of marriage) in Liberal Italy to extra-legal determinations of "worthiness" (moral character, patriotism, loyalty) in Fascist Italy, forcing women to be nimble in navigating state bureaucracies and frameworks. Using documents relating to the granting of pensions, permission for repatriation, citizenship requests, and naming conventions, the paper will explore the ways in which women and, in many cases, the children they sought to protect and provide, for were subject to scrutiny of their comportment and morals in the quest to access social benefits. It will show the mechanisms by which gendered expectations for "proper behavior" affected women's status as "deserving" beneficiaries of state assistance and how their lack of independent legal status placed them at the mercy of officials determining their eligibility for welfare.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF HABSBERG LEGISLATION ON SOCIAL POLICY IN THE KINGDOM OF SERBS, CROATS AND SLOVENES/ YUGOSLAVIA**

**Jelena RAFILOVIĆ**

*Institute for Recent History of Serbia*

The paper will describe the introduction and implementation of social legislation in the Kingdom of SCS/Yugoslavia with a special focus on the influences of Habsburg legislation. Social legislation, primarily labor legislation (the eight hour work day; the Act on Hygiene and the Protection of Workers; the Law on Social Security) that was established under pressure from international institutions after the First World War was not respected in most cases, but represented a major step towards the development of public and welfare institutions. In the article several issues will be analyzed: the differences in inherited social issues in the Kingdom; the share of Habsburg legislation in the new unified social legislation; and law enforcement in different regions of the Kingdom. A comparative analysis, at the level of the regions of the Kingdom, of social legislation will represent the similarities and differences in the development of the basic pillars of modern welfare states.

## FIUME WORKERS' SICKNESS FUND IN THE POST-IMPERIAL TRANSITION

Ivan JELIČIĆ

*Institute of Political History, Budapest*

The presentation will shed light on the activity of the Workers' Sickness Fund in Fiume from the late Habsburg period until the post-imperial transition. The Workers' Sickness Fund was primarily a welfare institution which guaranteed health insurance to some categories of workers, but also a potential democratization hub in the Kingdom of Hungary. In contrast to the heavy limitations on Hungarian political and administrative elections, those elections for sickness funds represented an opportunity for workers to elect their representatives. In Fiume, as well as in other areas of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, this opportunity was as result of the growing socialist movement. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Fiume Workers' Sickness Fund became an institution with socialists as leading figures, and later a leading socialist institution, an exception in the local political arena. With the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Fiume's leading politicians advocated for annexation to the Kingdom of Italy, facing Croatian-Yugoslav opposition to Italy as well as opposition from socialists who advocated for an alternative. In the post-imperial period, the Worker's Sickness Fund, which essentially functioned as a form of welfare, faced financial issues generated by the imperial collapse and the lack of a larger state network; however it was also the site of a political and symbolic struggle. Attacked by Italian nationalists, the institution attempted to maintain its independence and function as a shelter for socialist and communist figures.

**FROM FASCIST ASSISTANCE TO WELFARE:  
THE CASE OF TRIESTE DURING THE AMG (1945–1954)**

**Tullia CATALAN**  
*University of Trieste*

The aim of the paper is to analyse the transitional methods through which a strategy of change in the assistance system was consolidated in Trieste during the years of the Allied Military Government, in order to also establish a democratic system of welfare in the Adriatic city and its territory.

Particular attention was paid by the Allies to the following issues:

- training new personnel able to operate directly in the territory and in close contact with poor and disadvantaged families;
- training welfare functionaries through specialisation courses held at the UNO;
- creating close ties with important individuals in the anti-Fascist movement to work together to identify priorities within the assistance scheme;
- the handling of displaced persons and refugees;
- developing a relationship with the Catholic Church and its assistance programme.

## **YOUTH LABOUR ACTIONS IN YUGOSLAVIA AND PERCEPTIONS OF VOLUNTEER WORK: A MICRO-STUDY OF THE SLOVENIAN YOUTH ORGANISATION OF KOPER**

**Gašper MITHANS**

*Science and Research Centre Koper*

The beginnings of youth labour actions in Yugoslavia can be found during the Second World War, focusing on medical aid, farming, and in the last months of the war intensively on the reconstruction of homes and economic infrastructure, which was largely performed by women. Post-war reconstruction was thus a continuation of these actions, with praise for the ideals of brotherhood and unity, anti-Fascism, solidarity and equality, the cult of labour, and the Communist Party acknowledging that youth played an active role in the building of a “new Yugoslavia.” Anti-Fascist ideology was particularly emphasised in the first years (1945–1947) also in the context of the Julian March in Yugoslavia with several youth brigades hailing from areas under the control of the Allied Military Government, including some Italians (Stibilj, 2015). The voluntary basis of labour actions (cf. Baković, 2015) is the focus of this paper based on archival research of youth brigades from the local Slovenian Youth Organisation of Koper. The state-organised collective actions were in contradiction with most of the “Western” perceptions of volunteering as a feature of a “democratic” society, non-governmental actors, and individuality (cf. Petrović, 2020; Ljubojević, 2020). Despite the ideological propaganda evident in the mobilisation of brigadiers and in providing a “socialist education,” the efforts made by youth that helped rebuild and modernise the country – including some of the key infrastructure, industry, the new city of Nova Gorica, etc. – were an important instrument in moulding and representing a new regime of Yugoslav socialism both internally and internationally.

## **SOCIAL POLICY ALONG THE ITALO-YUGOSLAV BORDER: THE CASE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF RELATIVES OF DEPORTEES TO YUGOSLAVIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

**Urška LAMPE**

*Ca' Foscari University of Venice*

*Institute IRRIS*

The issue of the new frontier between Italy and Yugoslavia was one of the key diplomatic issues of the area at the end of the Second World War. Negotiations focused mainly on the political aspects and the question of the balance of power in the emerging polarised division of Europe into East and West. It is therefore not surprising that the Italian government focused heavily on its borderland areas, also in terms of cultural, social and propaganda assistance to numerous associations emerging during that period. To this end, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (*Presidenza del Consiglio dei ministri*) established a special office, the Office for Borderland Areas (*Ufficio per le Zone di Confine, UZC*), which operated from 1946 to 1967 and dealt with all matters relating to the borderland areas of the Julian March and Trentino-Alto Adige. Particularly interesting is its propaganda function in the borderland areas, for which the UZC had a special financial fund – Propaganda of “Italianity” (*Propaganda d’Italianità*). Through this fund the UZC financed numerous political, sports, cultural and humanitarian associations. In the Julian March, the most heavily financed organisation was, predictably, the Committee of Julian Exiles (*Comitato Esuli Giuliani*). However, among those funded was also the Association of Relatives of Deportees to Yugoslavia (*Associazione Congiunti dei Deportati in Jugoslavia*). This contribution will present the material from the UZC and illustrate how the Italian government provided assistance to the relatives of deportees who found themselves in financial difficulty.

## **‘TITO AND CHRIST’: THE DISPUTE ON WELFARE BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE YUGOSLAV AUTHORITIES IN POSTWAR ISTRIA**

**Mila ORLIĆ**  
*University of Rijeka*

This paper investigates the process of Yugoslav state- and nation- building in the multilingual rural region of Istria after World War II, focusing primarily on some aspects of continuity and change in social policy and welfare. A report by the local Communist Party Committee (KK KPH) stated that the “Tito and Christ front [was] formed in the countryside.” The symbolic union of a political and religious figure embodied what was happening in the post-war period in a rural society traditionally linked to the Catholic Church, and the affirmation of a new power that sought political and social revolution. On the one hand, the new Yugoslav authorities wanted to redefine and reshape the old loyalties in order to emancipate young people from the influence of the Church. On the other hand, the priests began a real “battle for souls” to educate the new generations. In this context, special attention will be paid to social policies for families and children in the organization of their free time.

## **HEALTH AND WELFARE FOR ALL! OR NOT? YUGOSLAV INTERNAL BORDERS AND THE SMALLPOX EPIDEMIC 1972**

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In the spring of 1972, Yugoslavia was hit by the last European smallpox epidemic. The deadly virus, which took 300 million lives in the 20th century alone, appeared after a 42 year absence in Yugoslavia, presenting a dramatic challenge for the country's health care system. The state response analysis reveals the virtues of the socialist health care system as well as some of its defects. Yugoslavia had rapidly modernized its public health care system since 1945, exploiting the Cold War divisions and sending doctors to be trained in the best medical institutions in the West, East, and Global South. That openness brought transnational solidarity. In less than a month, the country of 21 million vaccinated 18.2 million of its citizens because of the efficient health care services and "vaccine diplomacy," thanks to which Yugoslavia received significant support from the United States, USSR, and China.

However, the Yugoslav socialist utopia of equal access to health care services was never fully realized. The smallpox epidemics showed that some Yugoslavs were "more equal" than others – Kosovo, which experienced the most significant smallpox outbreak, received the least medical assistance and its citizens were the last to receive vaccines. The vaccination process also revealed growing tensions between Yugoslav republics, particularly visible in Slovenia, which did not have a single infected citizen but was the first to vaccinate its entire population. Moreover, smallpox restricted people's movement within Yugoslavia during epidemics. This was most visible in Kosovo, which was almost completely isolated from the rest of the country. The other internal borders were created in Slovenia, which had different health care measures than the rest of the country, with border controls and restrictions on internal movement.



**ASPECTS OF POLITICS AND DISCOURSE IN BORDER TRADE  
UNION STRUGGLES: COMPARING THE 1968 GENERAL STRIKE IN  
TRIESTE AND THE 1970 WORK STOPPAGE IN THE  
PORT OF KOPER**

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In the second half of the 1960s, an intense wave of strikes spread through the ports of the northern Adriatic. This wave was at its earliest and sharpest in Trieste, where based on a long tradition of workers' organising, the struggles focused on fierce opposition to the CIPE plan, the full implementation of which would have meant the closure of St Mark's shipyard in Trieste. Social unrest, however, also crossed the Yugoslav border during major protests in Trieste in 1966, 1968 and 1969, with work stoppages at the port of Rijeka in 1969 and 1971 and the first mass work stoppage within the Port of Koper in March 1970. The links between these regional disturbances can be observed, as Sabine Rutar describes it, as "[a]n apparent choreography of eruptive social protest in the border region" (Rutar, 2020).

The regional position along the most open border between the West and the East raises questions about the interconnectedness of social issues and methods of coping with them. The aim of this presentation will be to reflect on the possibilities of the circulation of strike culture and to outline the common issues of port workers through an analysis of the local press along the border and the impact of the local political response to the strike wave. In order to gain insight into the coverage of strike activity across the "Iron Curtain" divide, a closer look will be taken at press coverage of the general strike that took place in Trieste in June 1968 and the work stoppage at the Port of Koper in March 1970. In order to present a clear depiction of this strike wave, the local political reaction will be presented, as well as the impact that the strike wave had on both local and national politics.





