

ON HUMAN LOSSES AND THE EXODUS FROM ISTRIA DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE POST-WAR PERIOD

Marino MANIN*

Introduction

The issue of human losses in the Second World War in the *Julian March* or Venezia Giulia region must be viewed in light of War-related events and wider social movements, with special reference made to dynamics of events in Yugoslav territory. The issue of human losses is closely related, especially in the post-War period, with the issue of the "exodus", i.e. emigration from those areas occupied by the Yugoslav Army following World War II which were subsequently annexed to Yugoslavia as a result of the 1947 Peace Treaty and the 1954 London Memorandum.¹

Before proceeding, a word should be said about key terms used in this article. "Venezia Giulia" is the Italian term for what Slovenian and older Croatian literature refer to as *the Julian March*, and more recently (for instance, in *Istarska enciklopedija*) is literally translated as *the Julian March*. Actually, the term Julian Venice is used in administrative and political terminology between two World Wars, and does not refer to a historical region. The linguist Graziadio Isaia Ascoli coined the term in 1863. Until the World War I, Italians used it as a synonym for *Litorale Austriaco*, that is, the Austrian Littoral, which consisted of the County of Gorizia, the City of Trieste (which had been directly subordinated to the Crown) and the Margravate of Istria.

Between the World Wars, the term denoted an administrative area bounded by the 1866 border between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Kingdom of Italy and the frontier established by the 1920 Treaty of Rapallo and the 1924 Treaty of Rome, and consisted of four provinces: Gorizia, Trieste, Pula and Rijeka (the data for Zadar were given as well). It took up the entire former Austrian Littoral, together with Postojna, Rijeka, Zadar and Lastovo (but it

* Marino Manin, Ph. D., Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb, Croatia

¹ Giorgio Valussi, *Il confine nordorientale d'Italia* (Trieste: LINT, 1972); Janko Jeri, "Nekateri elementi diplomatske geneze vprašanja jugoslovansko-italijanske razmejitve po drugi svetovni vojni do leta 1954.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7 (1975), no. 1: 187-240; Budislav Vukas, "Trščansko pitanje" u 1974. godini s gledišta međunarodnog prava", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7 (1975), no. 1: 241-252; Marino Manin, "Julijska krajina i pitanje talijanske istočne granice od 1861. do 1975.", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 26 (1994), no. 1: 99-108.

did not include Kastav and Krk which had been detached from pre-war Istrian territory and awarded to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). The territory measured 8,953.38 square kilometres, and, on the eve of World War I, (1910) had a population of 963,315.

The population in 1910 of the Croatian territory subsequently annexed by Italy (consisting mostly of the Pula province, about half of the Rijeka province, and the entire Zadar province) totalled 355,410, of whom 155,023 (43.6%) were Croatian, 149,018 (41.9%) were Italian, and 14,049 (4.0%) were Slovenian-speaking inhabitants. The 1921 census was marred by manipulation and subsequent censuses taken during Italian rule did not include questions related to ethnicity or language. However, based on the census material from 1936, municipal officials in 1939 “reviewed” the ethnic status of the population of Julian Venice and found that, out of a total of 1,001,719 inhabitants, 606,623 spoke Italian (60.6%), 251,760 spoke Slovenian (25.1%), 134,945 spoke Croatian (13.5%), and the remaining (0.80%) spoke other languages. Taking into account emigration and the Italianisation measures imposed by Italy, these results can be considered rather trustworthy. They prove that Italy’s bureaucracy became aware of the failure of its denationalisation policies enforced in this area.²

While Italy entered the Second World War in 1940 after its attack on France, the situation in Julian Venice became significantly more dynamic after the Italian attack on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941 and as a result of the subsequent developments in the regions occupied by Italy. The most significant issue became the uprising, which spread over the Istrian and Kvarner areas. Armed conflict in Istria began in summer 1941 when the Communist Party of Croatia (KPH – *Komunistička partija Hrvatske*) and the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia (SKOJ – *Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije*) made their first inroads into the Peninsula. Later that year, Croatian populist leaders in central Istria accepted the KPH’s proposal to establish a common front in the struggle for people’s liberation. As a result, the first organized followers of the People’s Liberation Movement (NOP – *Narodno-oslobodilački pokret*) appeared in Istria in the first half of 1942. A severe blow to the Movement occurred with the April 1942 arrest of members of the KPH’s Local Committee for Liburnia and the June 1942 arrest of activists in the Pazin area. In June

² Compare: Lavo Čermelj, *Julijska krajina, Beneška Slovenija in Zadarska pokrajina. Imenovanje in politično-upravna razdelitev* (Beograd: Slovensko kulturno-prosvetno društvo “France Rožman”, 1945); “Venezia Giulia”, *Enciclopedia Italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti* (Roma, 1937), vol. XXXV, pp. 90-97; “Julijska krajina”, *Enciklopedija Slovenije* (Ljubljana, 1990), vol. 4, pp. 352; “Obala”, *Enciklopedija Slovenije* (Ljubljana, 1994), vol. 8, p. 46; “Primorska”, *Enciklopedija Slovenije* (Ljubljana, 1995), vol. 9, pp. 342-350; Goran Crnković, “Temeljna obilježja demografskih kretanja u hrvatskoj Istri u prvoj polovici XX. stoljeća”, *Republika Hrvatska* (1994), no. 185, pp. 37-48; Andrea Mattosi – Francesca Krasna, “Il “Censimento riservato” del 1939 sulla popolazione alloglotta nella Venezia Giulia”, *Quaderni del Centro studi economico-politici “E. Vanoni”* (1998), no. 3/4: 1-69; Marino Manin, “O povjerljivom popisivanju istarskih Hrvata provedenom 1939. godine (na temelju popisnoga materijala iz 1936. godine)”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 34 (2002), no. 3: 713-734; and, Franco Cecotti, “Julijska Venecija”, *Istarska enciklopedija* (Zagreb, 2005), p. 359.

1942, a group of combatants from *Brkinska* Partisan Unit arrived at Mount Učka, but left soon afterwards. According to Giron, a unit of Istrian combatants, formed by the Staff of the 2nd Primorsko-goranska (Littoral-Mountain) Partisan Unit prior to 25 August 1942, began to move toward Istria on that date, arriving at Planik in the beginning of September. The unit (consisting of fourteen men according to Giron) (though Švob and Konjhodžić contend that it consisted of eight men and a courier³) carried out an attack on the rail line between the villages of Rukavac and Jurdani, near Opatija, during the night of 27/28 October 1942. The raid caused some damage and disrupted rail traffic for a day. However, the unit's activities in the area came to an end after Italian forces attacked it in December 1942.⁴ As a result, NOP military operations spread with limited intensity in Istria through late autumn 1942, and continued at the same level at least until the capitulation of Italy in September 1943.

In the spring and summer of 1943, the foundations of the KPH's organisation for Istria were laid as were administrative-political organisations for the nascent federal Croatian republic, which had the earmarks of a one-party state.⁵

Overview of Historiographic Literature

After the Second World War, the extreme northeastern corner of Italian territory became known as Friuli-Venezia Giulia. This was recognition of the fact that the remainder of pre-war Venezia Giulia not annexed to Yugoslavia (i.e., the western parts of Gorizia, the city of Trieste and the extreme north-western portion of Istria) had been joined with Friuli. Different terms came to be used for territory brought under Yugoslavia, or, more specifically Croatia and Slovenia. Initially, the territory was referred to as "Istria and the Slovenian Littoral" (Primorje), which covered the entire territory of Julian Venice. The term "Istria" has remained in use for the territory belonging to Croatia (consisting of all areas to the west of Rijeka, though occasionally the term "Istria" only refers to the territory of the current County of Istria), while in Slovenia the terms used to define Slovenian territory which had formerly been part of the Venezia Giulia are Primorska and Obala.

³ Vinko Švob – Mahmud Konjhodžić, *Drugi odred Primoraca, Gorana i Istrana 1942. godine* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1969), pp. 306 - 307.

⁴ Antun Giron, *Zapadna Hrvatska u Drugom svjetskom ratu* (Rijeka: "Adamić", 2004), pp. 89-94. (According to Dukovski, the unit was formed on 27 August. Darko Dukovski, "Povijest. Ustanak i njemačka okupacija (1943-45)", *Istarska enciklopedija* (Zagreb, 2005), pp. 632-634).

⁵ Compare: Mario Mikolić, *Istra 1941.-1947. Godine velikih preokreta* (Zagreb: Barbat, 2003), pp. 12-35; Antun Giron, *Zapadna Hrvatska u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 65-67, 89-94 and 127-134; Darko Dukovski, "Povijest. Pod Italijom (1918-43)", *Istarska enciklopedija* (Zagreb, 2005), pp. 631-632; Darko Dukovski, "Povijest. Ustanak i njemačka okupacija (1943-45)", pp. 632-634; Herman Buršić, "Narodnooslobodilački odbori (NOO)", *Istarska enciklopedija*, p. 524; Herman Buršić, Davor Mandić i Redakcija, "Narodnooslobodilački pokret (NOP)", *Istarska enciklopedija*, pp. 524-525; Vinko Švob – Mahmud Konjhodžić, *Drugi odred Primoraca, Gorana i Istrana 1942. godine*, pp. 276-308 and pp. 325-331.

Writings concerning human losses in Istria can be classified into several categories. One should initially keep in mind the division of such writings based on the languages in which they are written and the national positions they espouse. Generally, Italian works deal with the exodus from various aspects, including, as a subset issue, the so-called *foibe* (soil cavity) victims.⁶ Croatian and Slovenian writings on the exodus are incomparably smaller in quantity.⁷

Several phases can be identified when examining the chronological appearance of literature concerning the exodus and *foibe*. A number of initial publications defended the position of each of the parties to the peace talks. Most of

⁶ Italian fiction has also dealt with the exodus, and even literary criticism has for quite some time analyzed the so-called “literature of exodus,” the best-known representatives of which are Fulvio Tomizza, Marisa Madieri, etc. Violence is examined in these writings within the context of the exodus, i.e., killing and throwing people into *foibe*, as is the atmosphere of general insecurity in the circumstances of revolutionary terror, which led to mass emigration. Compare: *La Battana. Rivista trimestrale di cultura*, XXVII (1990), no. 97-98 nuova serie (thematic issue titled: Letteratura dell'esodo); also, XXVIII (1991), no. 99-102 nuova serie (thematic issue titled: Letteratura dell'esodo. Pagine scelte); Antonio Pellizzer, *Voci nostre. Antologia degli scrittori italiani dell'Istria e di Fiume per gli alunni della classe VIII delle scuole elementari e delle scuole medie. III edizione aggiornata ed ampliata* (Rijeka-Fiume: EDIT, 1993); and, Antonio Pellizzer, *L'esodo, collante e chiavi di lettura*, *La Battana, Rivista trimestrale di cultura* XXXIX (2002), no. 145, pp. 49-62.

The issue of the exodus and victims has been dealt with by publicists based in emigrant organisations and connected with circles close to them. Compare: Luigi Papo de Montona, *L'Istria e le sue foibe. Storia e tragedia senza la parola fine* (Roma: Edizioni Settimo Sigillo, 1999); P. Flaminio Rocchi, *L'esodo dei 350 mila giuliani, fiumani e dalmati*, 4th ed. (Roma: Difesa adriatica, 1998), etc.

Various lists and summary results on the exodus and *foibe* victims have been published. Compare: Gianni Bartoli, *Il martirologio delle genti adriatiche* (Trieste: Tipografia moderna, 1961); Luigi Papo de Montona, *Albo d'oro. La Venezia Giulia e la Dalmazia nell'ultimo conflitto mondiale. Seconda edizione riveduta e ampliata* (Trieste: Unione degli istriani, 1995), etc.

The issues have been also examined by historians. Compare: Pietro Merù, “Esodo dall'Istria e dai Sudeti”, *La Battana, Rivista trimestrale di cultura*, XXXVIII (2001), no. 142: 46-67; Antonio Miculian, “Storiografia e pubblicistica sull'esodo: considerazioni critiche”, *Quaderni. Centro di ricerche storiche – Rovigno X* (1991), pp. 103-110; *Quaderni di Clío: Esodi. Trasferimenti forzati di popolazione nel Novecento europeo*, edited by Marina Cattaruzza, Marco Dogo i Raoul Pupo (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2000); Raoul Pupo, *Il lungo esodo. Istria: le persecuzioni, le foibe, l'esilio* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2005), etc.

⁷ Historians have published a wide spectrum of texts (ranging from fiction and publicist writing to scholarly historical studies), but the number of texts remains small due to the fact that only starting in the 1980s and continuing into the 1990s could writers, followed by publicists and historians, describe these events without engaging in polemics. Compare: Nedjeljko Fabio, *Vježbanje života* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1986); Nedjeljko Fabio, *Berenikina kosa* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1989); Milan Rakovac, “Iseljena Istra: Lire, zastave, autonomisti”, *Danas*, 24 July 1990, p. 65; Milan Rakovac, “Iseljena Istra: Dvostruko etničko oranje”, *Danas*, 31 July 1990, pp. 63-65; Milan Rakovac, “Iseljena Istra: Duša jača od vlasti”, *Danas*, 7 August 1990, pp. 63-65; Petar Strčić, “Egzodus Hrvata iz Istre i drugih hrvatskih krajeva između 1918. i 1958. godine kao politička, nacionalna i gospodarska pojava”, *Zbornik radova s Međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa: Talijanska uprava na hrvatskom prostoru i egzodus Hrvata (1918.-1943.)* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest i Društvo “Egzodus istarskih Hrvata”, 2001), pp. 19-60; and, Luciano Giuricin, “Troppe reticenze e giustificazioni nell'interpretazione dell'esodo. Risposta dovuta al saggio dello storico Petar Strčić sulla rivista ‘La Battana’”, *La Battana. Rivista trimestrale di cultura* XXXIX (2002), no. 143: 94-105.

their texts advocated the position of one side in order to gain the best possible leverage during negotiations. The earliest works are probably most helpful as they are based on first-hand information (archival sources, demographic analyses, etc.) and they avoid using disputable and easily challenged arguments.⁸

The decades following saw the appearance of works which discussed the issues by describing, on the one hand, the *foibe* and the exodus, and, on the other hand, the “people’s uprising and people’s liberation war.” However, they shared a major trait in repeating stereotypes and providing dogmatic viewpoints, while neglecting the facts and avoiding any analyses of underlying historical processes.⁹

On the Yugoslav side of the border, the taboo on the exodus and concurrent phenomena only lifted in the 1980s, though the subject became the fodder of publicists rather than historians!¹⁰ Naturally, publicists wrote about these issues in their own manner: they raised the question of the causes and spoke about the consequences of the exodus, but they were unable - and it was not their task - to conduct a thorough analysis of the causes and the inducement, flow, scope, and consequences of these events.

With Croatia’s independence and the democratisation of its society, historians have approached the problem more seriously. Their examination starts with the Italian occupation and the establishment of Italian denationalisation and discrimination policies between the two World Wars, and then treats the subsequent Slovene and Croat exodus, the escalation of the conflict in the Second World War and the regime change in the post-War period.¹¹

Concurrently, since late 1970s, the issue of the exodus and the post-War suffering has also been examined in a scholarly manner in Italy. University researchers began to publish books, organize scholarly gatherings, etc. In the last several years, very detailed syntheses of certain aspects and questions concerning these subjects have appeared in Italy.¹²

⁸ While the research and analyses are well-based, doubts remain concerning the sources of the data which were inaccessible and impossible to check (e.g. human losses): *Istria i Slovensko primorje. Borba za slobodu kroz vrijeme* (Beograd: Rad izdavačko poduzeće, 1952), pp. 306-307 and 381-382.

⁹ Compare, for instance, the *a priori* approach to the events and the views of pro-émigré and pro-NOP writings. If we put aside language characteristics and their respective literary value, the similarities are striking.

¹⁰ Nedjeljko Fabrio, Milan Rakovac and others.

¹¹ *Zbornik radova Međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa “Talijanska uprava na hrvatskom prostoru i egzodus Hrvata 1918.-1943.”*

¹² See *Quaderni di Clio: Esodi. Trasferimenti forzati di popolazione nel Novecento europeo*, edited by Marina Cattaruzza, Marco Dogo i Raoul Pupo (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2000); Giampaolo Valdevit, *Trieste. Storia di una periferia insicura* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2004); Sandi Volk, *Esuli a Trieste. Bonifica nazionale e rafforzamento dell’italianità sul confine orientale* (Udine: KAPPA VU, 2004); Raoul Pupo, *Il lungo esodo. Istria: le persecuzioni, le foibe, l’esilio* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2005); Claudia Cernigoi, *Operazione “foibe” tra storia e mito* (Udine: Resistenzastorica KAPPA VU, 2005).

While few in number, the writings of the Italian minority in Yugoslavia (that is, Slovenia and Croatia) should also be noted as they are extremely informative and differ and distance themselves from the above mentioned trends. This is because their primary purpose is not to justify or advocate any “higher” (i.e., national and state) interests, but rather to analyse the phenomena.¹³

In addition to the foregoing, relevant literature originating geographically and linguistically outside of the region should not be ignored.¹⁴

One needs to ask how the exodus and related issues are treated in syntheses and texts of divergent origin and character. Several such publications have recently appeared, written by historians from Italy, Slovenia and Croatia. Italian synthesis, *Istria. Storia di una regione di frontiera*, edited by Fulvio Salimbeni, says that the tortures inflicted by Fascists in the critical moments of autumn 1943 and spring 1945 fomented hatred and led to the equation of Fascism with the Italian state, which, in turn, caused bloodshed “to the detriment of Italians.” It further writes that “around five hundred people were killed and thrown into karst cavities” in the autumn of 1943.¹⁵

Darko Darovec writes that in 1943 a “mass people’s uprising broke out,” leading to the liberation of “all of Istria,” and that that members of all three national groups responded in great numbers “to the [calls for] mobilisation into Partisan units.” He notes that “some 30,000 Istrians participated in the National Liberation War.”¹⁶ However, he also writes about “the so-called *foibe* – the throwing of executed or still living people into karst cavities” and that “many people ended their lives in that tragic way at the time of Italy’s capitulation in 1943 and through 1945.”¹⁷

Finally, Darko Dukovski writes that after the Partisans took control of Istria’s cities in September 1943 “those Fascists (Italians and Croats) who com-

¹³ Compare: Antonio Miculian, “Storiografia e pubblicistica sull’esodo: considerazioni critiche”, *Quaderni. Centro di ricerche storiche – Rovigno X* (1991): 103-110; Luciano Giuricin, “Troppe reticenze e giustificazioni nell’interpretazione dell’esodo. Risposta dovuta al saggio dello storico Petar Strčić sulla rivista ‘La Battana’”, pp. 94-105, etc.

¹⁴ Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile. Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003); Roberto Rabel, *Between East and West. Trieste, the United States and the Cold War, 1941-1945* (Durham-London: Duke University Press, 1988), etc.

¹⁵ “(...) il diffondersi dei soprusi finiva infatti per dar corpo, agli occhi delle vittime di una simile politica, a quel identificazione tra fascismo e stato italiano che i fascisti sin dal primo momento avevano perseguito, ma che nei momenti critici dell’autunno del 1943 e della primavera del 1945 si sarebbe ritorta sanguinosamente a danno degli italiani” (emphasis by M. M.).

“Vittime dell’insurrezione sociale e nazionale, ed in alcuni casi anche di atti di criminalità comune, vennero trucidate e gettate nelle foibe carsiche all’incirca cinquecento persone ed il trauma della strage, vissuto non solo come ricordo ma come possibilità sempre latente, si fissò stabilmente nella memoria degli istriani di sentimenti italiani” (emphasis by M. M.).

Raoul Pupo, “L’età contemporanea”, *Istria. Storia di una regione di frontiera*, ed. Fulvio Salimbeni (Brescia: Marcelliana, 1994), pp. 127 and 131.

¹⁶ Darko Darovec, *Pregled istarske povijesti* (Pula: Nova Istra. Istarski ogranak Društva hrvatskih književnika, 1996), pp. 76-77.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

promised themselves before the people and who were guilty for the arrests or deaths of Communists and their sympathisers, were detained. After some of them were subjected to non-obligatory interrogations at the sites of their arrests, all of them were transferred to Pazin, where the *People's Court* tried them . . . before the arrival of the German Army. While some whose guilt could not be proven were sent home, others were convicted based on oral testimonies and executed. In this manner, an unknown number of innocent people, both Italians and Croats, were killed mostly because of some unsettled scores or were victims of revenge.¹⁸ That is the manner in which the sufferings of 1943 and 1945 are depicted in contemporary Istrian history synthesis.

The exodus from Istria has been analysed in more detail. The synthesis of Istrian history, edited by Salimbeni, estimates 300,000 to 350,000 displaced persons left the area, going to Italy as well as to North America and Australia from 1945 to 1956.¹⁹ The same source claims that the exodus had a plebiscitary character and that the percentage of the displaced from major cities covered from 80% to 99% of the population.²⁰ A reader may challenge that assertion – and that was done in earlier and more recent post-War literature – with the argument that the 1910 census had not recorded such a large number of Italians living in the territory Italy “gave up” after the Second World War to Yugoslavia; however, before commencing a more thorough analysis, it would be more reasonable to obtain a wider picture by comparing the texts of two other authors – each representative of Slovenian and Croatian historiography.

Darovec says that the Slovene-inhabited area around Muggia, consisting of 11 square kilometres of Zone A of the Free Territory of Trieste (FTT) awarded to Yugoslavia under the London Memorandum, numbered “3,400 inhabitants of whom 2,800 immediately fled to Italy.” He admits that “that Slovenia also received a belt of territory with the Slovenian part of Istria inhabited by an

¹⁸ Darko Dukovski, *Istra: kratka povijest dugoga trajanja. Od prvih naseobina do danas* (Pula: Istarski ogranak DHK, 2004), p. 162.

¹⁹ “Il decennio che intercorre fra la meta degli anni Quaranta e quella degli anni Cinquanta – il grande esodo si esaurì infatti con il 1956 – costituisce dunque il periodo in cui si consumò una frattura sostanziale all’interno della lunga vicenda storica dell’Istria, dalla quale venne drammaticamente espunto il gruppo nazionale, al completo delle sue articolazioni sociali, che a quella storia aveva impresso la più chiara impronta. (...) Le stime più attendibili oscillano fra le 300 e le 350000 unità (...)”

Raoul Pupo, “Letà contemporanea”, *Istria. Storia di una regione di frontiera*, pp. 133-134.

²⁰ The author’s interpretation of the duration of the exodus is that the Yugoslav authorities tried to avoid presenting a negative image to the international public (which had been caused by the mass emigration from Pula) by portraying the population movements as isolated cases rather than as a general trend: “Con il suo carattere plebiscitario infatti, l’esodo non solo avrebbe rischiato di spopolare la penisola – nei principali centri abitati le partenze oscillarono infatti fra l’80% ed il 99% - ma avrebbe testimoniato in maniera inequivocabile la durezza dell’oppressione nazionale esercitata nei confronti degli italiani, e ciò in contrasto con i canoni ufficiali della politica del regime, imperniata non già sul concetto di ‘pulizia etnica’, bensì su quello della ‘fratellanza italo-jugoslava.’”

Raoul Pupo, “Letà contemporanea”, *Istria. Storia di una regione di frontiera*, pp. 135-136.

Italian majority . . . The political change resulted in enormous ethnic changes after 1947 . . . ”²¹ The author concludes that by 1981 the number of Italians in that part of Slovenia had been reduced to 10% of the number of Italians in 1910, and that the exact number of relocated Istrians will only be “established after a thorough analysis of the emigration issue . . . ”²²

Dukovski adds that “the relocation of Italian, Croat and Slovene population from Istria in that period is wrongly referred to in Croatian historiography as the exodus of Italians, and by Italian historiography *Il grande esodo*.” Dukovski writes that the phenomenon had been caused and induced by “the unsettled political and legal status of Istria, the diplomatic struggle for its unification with Croatia, the unsolved national problems, and the change in the social and political order.”²³ The author lists five causes of the exodus: 1) general political instability in Europe, 2) political tensions between Yugoslavia and Italy, 3) general legal and political insecurity in the period immediately following the War, 4) intense propaganda by Italian governmental and non-governmental institutions, and 5) events in the Yugoslav zone. He describes the exodus process as having gone through four phases: 1) the period immediately following Italy’s capitulation – emigration out of fear of revenge, 2) the period between the end of the War and the signing of the 1947 Treaty of Peace – emigration for economic reasons and as a result measures imposed by the new Yugoslav government (which led to the emigration of tradesmen and craftsmen), 3) the period after the 1947 Treaty of Peace when emigration reached its crescendo in 1951, and 4) the period between 1954 and 1955 involving emigration from Zone B of the FTT.²⁴ The author estimates “that 143,739 inhabitants left Istria between 1945 and 1961.”²⁵

The above clearly shows the differences in each author’s approach and arguments as well as in the dimensions and interpretation of these events.

Concerning Victims of the Partisans

The issues surrounding the *foibe* and the problem of the post-War exodus are only two (though by far the most tragic given their dimensions and consequences) of the final phase of the ethnic and territorial division between Italy on one side, and Yugoslavia, that is Slovenia and Croatia, on the other.

The period prior to and following 1915, when Italy, after a period of “neutrality” in which it engaged in negotiations concerning territorial concessions primarily focused on the northern Adriatic, left the Tripartite Pact and joined the Western Allies, is well studied.²⁶ The process of establishing borders after

²¹ Darko Darovec, *Pregled istarske povijesti* (Pula: C.A.S.H., 1996), pp. 80.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 81 and 83.

²³ Darko Dukovski, *Istra: kratka povijest dugoga trajanja. Od prvih naseobina do danas*, p. 193.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-199.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

²⁶ Dragovan Šepić, *Italija, saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje 1914.-1918.* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970).

the First World War (the negotiations at the Versailles Peace Conference, the mediation of the Great Powers (an interesting American proposal, the so-called Wilson Line, took into account a wide spectrum of historic, geographic, and ethnic factors); bilateral negotiations and the Treaty of Rapallo; problems with the Rijeka buffer-state and the Italian annexation of the territory) has also been thoroughly examined,²⁷ as have been the territorial solutions imposed during the Second World War.²⁸

However, issues surrounding the division of the area of Julian Venice, that is Istria and Slovenian coastal area after the Second World War, have been less well studied (e.g., final military operations and the demarcation between the occupation zones - the Morgan-Jovanović Line of June 1945); negotiations and proposals for division between Italy and Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference in 1946 and 1947; the solution of the Peace Agreement and continued tensions due to the FTT territorial buffer zone; the temporary solution defined by the London Memorandum in 1954, which became permanent based on the 1975 Osimo Agreements, etc.).²⁹

One of the aspects of a study of the division of Julian Venice is the effect of the two World Wars and the human losses caused by them. Human losses from the area must also include the victims of *foibe* during and immediately after the Second World War. The number of such victims became the subject of much speculation immediately after the War as well as thereafter.

The word *foibe* is found in the Istrian-Venetian, Istrian-Roman (*the Istrian language*) and Furlanian dialects and means "karst cavities" or "karst vallies." The term became part of the political discourse in Italy in summer 1945³⁰ when the Italian press started publishing testimonies about the suffering of civilians and the disposal of their remains in *foibe* in the part of Julian Venice

²⁷ Corrado Belci, *Quel confine mancato. La linea Wilson (1919-1945)* (Brescia: Marcelliana, 1996); Ferdo Čulinović, *Riječka država. Od Londonskog pakta i danuncijade do Rapalla i aneksije Italiji* (Zagreb: Povijesno društvo NR Hrvatske, 1953), etc.

²⁸ Concerning Italy's attack on Yugoslavia, territorial conquests, and the border established in 1941 with the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), see: Antun Giron, *Zapadna Hrvatska u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, and Mario Mikolić, *Istra 1941.-1947. Godine velikih preokreta*. Concerning the situation after Italy's capitulation, the activities of the NOP, the NDH's plans and the solution imposed by the Third Reich by establishing and making that area (except for Zadar and certain of the islands) into the Adriatic Littoral Operation Zone, see: Antun Giron-Petar Strčić, *Poglavnikovom Vojnom uredu. Treći Reich, NDH, Sušak - Rijeka i izvješće dr. Oskara Turine 1943.* (Rijeka: Povijesno društvo Rijeke, 1993); Roland Kaltenegger, *Zona d'operazione Litorale Adriatico. La battaglia per Trieste, l'Istria e Fiume* (Gorizia: Libreria editrice goriziana, 1996), etc.

²⁹ Vladimir Dedijer, *Pariska konferencija* (Zagreb: "Ognjen Prica", 1948); Mijo Mirković, "Tri etničke linije", *Problemi sjevernog Jadrana* 1 (1963), pp. 1-35; Janko Jeri, "Nekateri elementi diplomatske geneze vprašanja jugoslovansko-italijanske razmejitve po drugi svetovni vojni do leta 1954", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Zagreb 7 (1975), no. 1: 187-240; Budislav Vukas, "Tršćansko pitanje" u 1974. godini s gledišta međunarodnog prava", *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7 (1975), no. 1: 241-252, etc.

³⁰ The term used in the standard Italian language is "voragine," and the term "foiba" is used only in the north-eastern part of Italy.

controlled by the Yugoslav Army.³¹ Some of those events took place in 1943 (in the period between Italy's capitulation on 8 September until the German occupation in early October), and on a larger scale in May 1945 (as a collateral part of final war operations and immediately thereafter). Similar cases also occurred in smaller numbers during the War linking these two periods of escalated violence.³² However, one should emphasize that the literature that deals with *foibe* victims rarely lists the persons killed and actually thrown into karst cavities.

As a rule, the term *foibe* has been used to cover all human losses caused by the Yugoslav side in the conflict, regardless of the manner of death, possible court proceedings and any verdicts giving a basis for executing such measures, or the handling of human remains (i.e., whether buried in mass graves, thrown into karst cavities or bauxite mines, buried in individual graves, etc.). Some authors have attempted to pass off as *foibe* victims practically all human losses in Julian Venice, which in the end simply widens the spectrum of allegations and speculations on the dimensions of the problem.³³

When we deal with the issue of *foibe* in the narrow sense, i.e., only those victims whose last resting place were karst cavities, the data found in historical literature refers to only several such cavities where human remains have been discovered, most of which are located in the territory of the Republic

³¹ Namely, local Istrian papers were already writing about these matters in the period of German occupation, following the exhumation of cavity victims in September 1943, e.g. *Corriere Istriano* in October and November 1943.

See: Antun Giron, *Zapadna Hrvatska u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 206-207.

³² P. Flaminio Rocchi, *Lesodo dei 350 mila giuliani, fiumani e dalmati*, 4th ed., pp. 569-689; Guido Rumici, *Infoibati (1943-1945) I nomi, i luoghi, i testimoni, i documenti* (Milano: Mursia, 2002), pp. 59-123 and pp. 202-259.

³³ For instance, Papo (quoted also by Vladimir Žerjavić), on the cover of his book *Albo d'oro...* gives a partial view of a *foibe*, thus suggesting that all of the names covered in the books were *foibe* "victims." However, the publication mentions more than twenty thousand names. It includes the names of members of all services of the Italian armed forces originating from Julian Venice who died in the Second World War; the names of Italian soldiers killed in that area; civilian victims of bombings; victims of German camps; and even some fallen Partisans. It also includes persons killed or sentenced to death immediately after the War. However, Papo's lists do not include some names that symbolised the resistance in Julian Venice, e.g. Pinko Tomažič or Alma Vivoda. His lists include the fisherman Bruno Zerbin (from Grado), killed on 19 November 1986 by Yugoslav Navy members when trying to escape Yugoslav territorial waters after being caught fishing illegally; Air Force General Licio Giorgierio (whose origins are from Trieste), killed in Rome by the Red Brigades on 28 March 1987; and officer Andrea Millevoi (born in Rome on 4 February 1972) killed in Mogadishu on 1 July 1993 (the author justifies his inclusion in the book with the fact that his parents originated from Rijeka). These examples illustrate Papo's methodology!

See: Luigi Papo de Montona, *Albo d'oro. La Venezia Giulia e la Dalmazia nell'ultimo conflitto mondiale. Seconda edizione riveduta e ampliata*, pp. 682-683; Claudia Cernigoi, *Operazione "foibe" tra storia e mito*, pp. 79-85.

of Croatia.³⁴ Immediately after the Italian capitulation on 8 September 1943, arrests in Istria commenced, starting with the central and eastern parts of Istria and thereafter in the southern and western parts of Istria (the Buzet, Labin, Pazin and Žminj areas; on 11 September), then in the area of Buje (around 14 September), in Rovinj (after 16 September), and in areas of Poreč and Tinjan (around 19 September). However, exhumation has not been fully carried out, so that we do not have a final count of the number of victims.³⁵ Exhumation had been carried out during the War, mostly in the karst cavities of central and southeastern Istria by a group of firemen brought together for the purpose. Those exhumations revealed that most of the killings in late summer and early autumn 1943 had been motivated by the nationalist rebellion and personal disputes.³⁶ In contrast, those who ended up in karst cavities at the end of the War had been killed as a result of the takeover of the territory and subsequent revolutionary terror. Several mass execution sites discovered in the area of Julian Venice controlled by the Western Allies have been partly exhumed. As for the area controlled by the Yugoslav Army, one cannot conclude that throwing victims in karst cavities was common.³⁷

Therefore, one must bear in mind that neither the inspection of karst cavities nor thorough archival researches have been completed.³⁸ For these reasons, one cannot speak about any finality in the results of the research undertaken to date.

³⁴ Guido Rumici, *Infoibati (1943-1945) I nomi, i luoghi, i testimoni, i documenti* (Milano: Mursia, 2002), pp. 59-123; Antun Giron, *Zapadna Hrvatska u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, pp. 205-207; Giovanna Solari, *Il dramma delle foibe (1943-1945). Studi, interpretazioni e tendenze* (Trieste: Unione degli istriani. Centro culturale Gianrinaldo Carli, 2004), p. 15 and pp. 45-48.

³⁵ P. Flaminio Rocchi, *Lesodo dei 350 mila giuliani, fiumani e dalmati*, 4th ed. (Roma: Difesa adriatica, 1998), pp. 21-26 and pp. 32-43; Giovanna Solari, *Il dramma delle foibe (1943-1945). Studi, interpretazioni e tendenze*, pp. 45-48.

³⁶ These victims died in karst caves, but also included victims buried in several bauxite mines in the Pazin area.

See: P. Flaminio Rocchi, *Lesodo dei 350 mila giuliani, fiumani e dalmati*, 4th ed. (Roma: Difesa adriatica, 1998), pp. 578-586; Claudia Cernigoj, *Operazione "foibe" tra storia e mito*, pp. 115-151.

³⁷ For that purpose the pit hole of the mine Bazovica was used. Partial exhumation was carried out, but was discontinued due to technical problems.

With respect to the area to the east of the Morgan-Jovanović demarcation line, there are indications of the use of *foibe* as mass graves, but exhumations have not been carried out.

See: P. Flaminio Rocchi, *Lesodo dei 350 mila giuliani, fiumani e dalmati*, 4th ed., pp. 27-32; Guido Rumici, *Infoibati (1943-1945) I nomi, i luoghi, i testimoni, i documenti*, pp. 260-297; Raoul Pupo – Roberto Spazzali, *Foibe* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2003), p. 28; Claudia Cernigoj, *Operazione "foibe" tra storia e mito*, pp. 164-209.

³⁸ At this moment, the Forensic Institute is analysing remains found in four caves in the Čičarija area of eastern Istria (Hribce, Bršljanovica, the cave on Krog and the cave near Trstenik). According to Istrian County Public Attorney Vlatko Nuić, speleologists "have found 20 human skeletons in one of the caves; the arms [of the victims] were tied with telephone cord . . ." The same source says that the speleologists found "a number of cavities containing more bones presumed to be human." See: "Nuić: Ekshumacija nema političke konotacije", *Novi list*, Rijeka, 14 March 2004, <http://www.novolist.hr/Default.asp?WCI=Pretrazivac&WCU=285A28582863285B286>.

Indeed, there is also another issue, and that is that beside the remains of the local civilian population, the cavities also contain the remains of military personnel (soldiers or prisoners of war). As a result, one can conclude that the total number of human remains in karst cavities should be much larger than the number of people killed who were from that area, although this group was distinguished as various military losses of the armies that happened to find themselves in Julian Venice between 1943 and 1945.

The data concerning the number of *foibe* victims differs significantly. The most recent research shows about 286 such cases concern persons who resided in what is now the Croatian part of Venezia Giulia.³⁹ The final figure should be much larger, but it will still be far from the estimates given in Italian literature.

Italian authors have given various estimates, with the highest (Papo's) claiming 16,500 military and civilian victims.⁴⁰ Pirinin's estimate of 12,000 *foibe* victims is more moderate.⁴¹ Other estimates, usually varying between 4,500 and 6,000 people, are better grounded. Such numbers not only include victims from the Croatian part of Istria, but for all areas west of the Rapallo-Rome frontier (where the Yugoslav Army operated) and include Trieste. Several lists of names of victims support these figures.⁴² However, while reading these lists, one notices that they not only include the victims of *foibe* (*infoibati*), but also soldiers and civilians whose deaths had been or are suspected of being caused by the Yugoslav side.⁴³

Based on research carried out for the area of the Province of Rijeka, it has been established that total human losses in the Second World War and immediately after the War in that area were, though far larger (about four times the number) than the average losses for Italian territory, some three times less (2.4%) than the average percentage of losses for the Republic of Croatia (7.3%). Concerning when these deaths took place, it has been shown that a lit-

³⁹ Antun Giron has established identities of 286 persons killed in that period, and quotes the statements of the Secretary of the Fascist Party of 19 January 1944 saying that Partisans killed 349 Italians.

See: Antun Giron, *Zapadna Hrvatska u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, p. 207.

⁴⁰ "(...) non possiamo che confermare che le vittime, militari e civili, per mano slavocomunista furono non meno di 16.500."

See: Luigi Papo de Montona, *Albo d'oro. La Venezia Giulia e la Dalmazia nell'ultimo conflitto mondiale. Seconda edizione riveduta e ampliata*, p. 27.

⁴¹ Giovanna Solari, *Il dramma delle foibe (1943-1945). Studi, interpretazioni e tendenze*, pp. 85.

⁴² Gianni Bartoli, *Il martirologio delle genti adriatiche*.

⁴³ For Instance, Bartoli's list on the first page contains 10 names in total, which are marked as "deported", but he gives no information on their sufferings. One should note that only 4 of them were born in Julian Venice, the other 6 having been born in various Italian regions. One of the persons listed has no apparent relation with Julian Venice, other than being registered with the archives of the Italian Red Cross in Trieste.

See: Gianni Bartoli, *Il martirologio delle genti adriatiche*, p. 17.

tle less than one-quarter of the total number of human losses (652 out of 2,754 persons) related to the period after the liberation of Rijeka on 3 May 1945. Moreover, concerning which side inflicted these violent deaths, it turns out that about one quarter of the cases (656 persons) were caused by the Yugoslav side.⁴⁴

Based on the above conclusions, we could hypothesize that similar values could result from an examination of the remainder of the Croatian part of Istria. Using the above results, derived from a joint Croatian-Italian research project, one can conclude that the total number of human losses during and immediately after the Second World War in Croatian Istria should be much smaller than the average human losses of the Republic of Croatia and the former Yugoslavia as a whole, with the human losses caused by the Yugoslav side totalling one quarter of the total number.

Thus, *foibe* victims are only a small portion of the human losses caused by the Yugoslav side, and one can assert that they total several hundred people.

However, this does not exhaust the question of the total number of *foibe* victims, because – if we look at the issue as a whole – we need to also include victims from other areas (first of all from Trieste), as well as those in the military who ended up in the *foibe* (though the latter would be present in Croatian territory to a smaller extent given that the general direction of withdrawal of Italian and other Axis forces tended to be further north).

These working hypotheses are not meant to prejudice any conclusions about the scope of violent deaths in the area of Julian Venice during and immediately after the War because the situation differs from province to province, and between urban centres and villages. In reviewing such hypotheses, we should also keep in mind the location of communications over which final military operations took place, the locations of military strongholds, the ethnic composition in the area examined, etc.

Exodus

Another issue related to the question of human losses is the matter of the post-War exodus. The first exodus occurred between the two World Wars due to the national-discriminatory actions of the Italian military-occupational government, and afterwards due to measures imposed by the Fascist regime. This resulted in emigration of Slovenes and Croats from Julian Venice.

The second exodus took place after the Second World War, and affected the area Italy had lost after the 1947 Paris Treaty of Peace and the London Memorandum (1954). Emigration was caused by the psychological and political significance of the change in borders between the states and the fact that for the first time the Croatian and Slovenian governments had established control over all of Istria. However, emigration was also induced by the actions of the

⁴⁴ *Le vittime di nazionalità italiana a Fiume e dintorni (1939-1947) / Žrtve talijanske nacionalnosti u Rijeci i okolici (1939.-1947.)* (Roma: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali. Direzione generale per gli archivi, 2002), pp. 199-207.

Yugoslav authorities and secret police, the introduction of revolutionary measures in all fields of social life, and calls for emigration coming from Italy.

The burden of the Fascist period made the Italians' position even more complex, because both in Yugoslavia and among leftist circles in Italy, the emigrants were labelled as collaborationists and Fascists.

Emigration started after the Italian capitulation (1943) with the withdrawal of the population from war-affected areas and of some Italians who had come to Istria during Italian rule, as well as those individuals who had compromised themselves during the Fascist regime.

Emigration followed at the very end of the War and in the period until the signing of the 1947 Treaty of Peace. The Treaty provided the population of the territory with the right to choose or "opt" between Yugoslav citizenship and staying, and retaining Italian citizenship and moving to Italy. According to sources found in the archives of Croatian internal affairs services, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, 156,000 *optants* (97,000 of full age and 34,000 minors, and 20,000 persons from the Croatian part of FTT and 5,000 released from citizenship) left Croatian territory based on these provisions in the Treaty.⁴⁵ In Zone B of FTT, the exodus reached its peak in the mid-1950s when the London Memorandum was executed. Some of the participants in the post-War exodus remained in Trieste, some were allotted to one of 109 refugee camps located all over Italy, and many emigrated to America and Australia.⁴⁶

The estimates of the number of emigrants vary. In Italy, most sources speak of 350,000 people, with some quoting much larger figures.⁴⁷ Recent Croatian demographic research has estimated the exodus at 220,000 to 225,000 people, of which 188,000 left from what became Croatian territory.⁴⁸ These figures are similar to those of the Italian organization which provided assistance to refugees (*Opera di Assistenza ai Profughi Giuliani e Dalmati*). It made a list containing approximately 201,440 names which it estimated represented about 80% of the total number of refugees (meaning that the total number may have been around 250,000).⁴⁹ This issue certainly requires additional research.

The consequences of emigration can be seen in census figures. In 1948, 76,093 Italians lived in Croatia; in 1953 – 33,316; in 1961 – 21,102. This compares with 149,018 Italian speaking citizens in the same territory in 1910.

⁴⁵ Vladimir Žerjavić, "Doseljavanja i iseljavanja s područja Istre, Rijeke i Zadra u razdoblju 1910.-1971.," *Društvena istraživanja. Časopis za opća društvena pitanja* 2 (1993), no. 6-7/4-5: 631-655.

⁴⁶ P. Flaminio Rocchi, *Lesodo dei 350 mila giuliani, fiumani e dalmati*, 4th ed., pp. 212-223.

⁴⁷ Also, pp. 201-205.

⁴⁸ Vladimir Žerjavić, *Doseljavanja i iseljavanja s područja Istre, Rijeke i Zadra u razdoblju 1910.-1971.* pp. 631-655.

⁴⁹ Manlio Cecovini, *Lesodo dalle terre adriatiche. Rilevazioni statistiche* (Roma: Opera per l'assistenza ai profughi giuliani e dalmati, 1958), p. 22.

56,188 Italians lived in Istria in 1945, 34,722 in 1948, 18,981 in 1953, and 14,354 in 1961.⁵⁰ After the Second World War, the majority of the Italian population in Istria, as well a significant amount of Croats, left resulting in a number of economic and social changes and in a change in Istria's cultural identity.

Conclusion

Based on the above, we can conclude that there have been many texts written in Italy on the issue of human losses and the exodus from Istria and other areas which had been under Italian rule between the two World Wars. In Northern Italy, exodus "structures" such as *foibe* (e.g. the one in Bazovica near Trieste) and their victims (e.g. Norma Cosseto from Labinci in the Poreč area), are seen as a symbol of the suffering and "martyrdom" of Italians in Istria and the entire Julian Venice. Recently, much effort has been invested to give this segment of suffering of this population in the Second World War a place in Italy's collective memory, taking it out of the context of an analysis of overall wartime suffering, as well as the context of historical science, and attributing to it other aspects and functions.

Only in the 1980s was this issue opened to discussion, first by writers and publicists, and afterwards by historians, demographers and other scholars in other disciplines. A number of texts have been published that help elucidate the issue and establish the final figures of victims and of those who left Istria.

Translated by Ida Jurković

⁵⁰ *La comunità nazionale italiana nei censimenti jugoslavi 1945-1991*, ed. Egidio Ivetic i Luciano Giuricin (Trieste-Rovigno: Unione italiana – Fiume. Università popolare di Trieste, 2001).

Sulle perdite umane dell'Istria durante la seconda guerra mondiale e nel dopoguerra

Riassunto

L'autore si sofferma in primo luogo sui (controversi) risultati storiografici raggiunti nello studio delle perdite umane, per quanto riguarda il territorio dell'Istria durante la Seconda guerra mondiale e nell'immediato dopoguerra. Particolarmente in base alle ricerche più recenti, il saggio tratta la questione delle cosiddette foibe, cioè del problema della violenta privazione della vita per le persone che (nella maggior parte dei casi) non subirono alcun processo nel periodo che seguì alla capitolazione dell'Italia (settembre e ottobre del 1943), come pure negli ambiti delle operazioni belliche finali e nel periodo che le seguì (maggio 1945). Inoltre, si pone pure una serie di tesi e di fini di ricerca, che dovrebbero essere compresi dalla ricerca da svolgere.

Dunque, in base alle ricerche svolte per la Provincia di Fiume, è stato stabilito che la somma delle perdite umane della Seconda guerra mondiale e dell'immediato dopoguerra del citato territorio – anche se di molto superiori alla media delle perdite per il territorio italiano – ammontano circa ad un terzo delle perdite medie riscontrate per il territorio della Repubblica di Croazia. Per quel che riguarda il periodo in cui si svolsero queste violente privazioni della vita, è stato stabilito che circa una quinta parte del numero totale delle perdite umane si riferiva al periodo successivo al 3 maggio 1945, mentre per quanto riguarda la parte che provocò le violente privazioni della vita, risultò che circa una quarta parte dei casi fu causata dalla parte jugoslava. Secondo la ricerca che abbiamo svolto, possiamo porre l'ipotesi di lavoro che dei valori simili dovrebbero risultare anche per il resto del territorio croato dell'Istria.

Über die menschlichen Verluste in Istrien während des Zweiten Weltkrieges und in der Nachkriegszeit

Zusammenfassung

Zuerst betrachtet der Autor kritisch die bisherigen (kontroversen) historiographischen Resultate der Forschungen über die menschlichen Verluste in Istrien im Zweiten Weltkrieg und in der Nachkriegszeit. Insbesondere auf der Grundlage der neueren Forschungen beschäftigt sich der Autor in dieser Arbeit mit der Frage der sog. Grotten, bzw. mit dem gewaltsamen Töten der Leute (mehrmals stattgefunden) ohne irgendeinen Gerichtsprozess, unmittelbar nach der Kapitulation von Italien (September und Oktober 1943) und im Rahmen der abschließenden Kriegsoperationen, aber auch unmittelbar nach ihnen (Mai 1945). Weiterhin wird auch eine ganze Reihe von Forschungsthesen und -zielen aufgestellt, die in künftigen Forschungen umfasst werden sollen.

Aufgrund der für die Provinz von Rijeka durchgeführten Forschungen wurde nämlich festgestellt, dass die gesamten menschlichen Verluste des Zweiten Weltkrieges und der Nachkriegszeit auf diesem Gebiet - obwohl erheblich größer als die durchschnittlichen Verluste auf dem italienischen Territorium - ungefähr dreimal kleiner als der durchschnittliche Wert für das ganze Gebiet der Republik Kroatien sind. Hinsichtlich der Periode der gewaltsamen Tötung der Leute wurde festgestellt, dass sich ungefähr ein Fünftel der menschlichen Verluste auf den Zeitraum nach dem 3. Mai 1945 bezieht. Genauso wurde festgestellt, dass ein Viertel der Ermordungen von der jugoslawischen Seite verübt worden war. Aufgrund der durchgeführten Untersuchungen lässt sich eine Arbeitshypothese aufstellen, die darauf hinweist, dass die Forschungen für den restlichen Teil von Istrien auch ähnliche Ergebnisse aufweisen würden.