

FRANCESCA ROLANDI

**Those Who Left
and Those Who
Arrived: Population
Movements from
and to Post-Second
World War Rijeka**

FRANCESCA ROLANDI

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA OKANAGAN – CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES SOUTH

EASTERN EUROPE RIJEKA

FRANCESCA.ROLANDI@GMAIL.COM

UDC 94(100)“1939/1945”:331.556>(497.57)

<https://doi.org/10.32728/flux.2021.3.5>

Original scientific paper

Those Who Left and Those Who Arrived: Population Movements from and to Post-Second World War Rijeka¹

In the years after the Second World War, the city of Rijeka found itself caught in the middle of various migratory trajectories. The departure of locals who self-identified as Italians and opted for Italian citizenship occurred simultaneously with other population movements that drained the city of inhabitants and brought in newcomers. Many locals defected and traveled to Italy, which was either their final destination or a country they transited through before being resettled elsewhere. Furthermore, after the war ended, workers from other Yugoslav areas started arriving in the city. A flourishing economy proved capable of attracting migrants with promises of good living standards; however, political reasons also motivated many to move to this Adriatic city. The latter was the case for former economic emigrants who decided to return to join the new socialist homeland and for Italian workers who symbolically sided with the socialist Yugoslavia. Rijeka was not simply a destination for many migrants—it was also a springboard for individuals from all over the Yugoslav Federation to reach the Western Bloc. This article argues that examining these intertwining patterns together rather than separately offers new insight into the challenges the city experienced during its postwar transition.

KEYWORDS:

Rijeka, Upper Adriatic, population movements, mobility, labor, ideology, refugees, Second World War, Cold War, transition

¹ This article draws on research supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada as part of the project *Rijeka in Flux: borders and urban change after World War II*. The author would like to thank Marco Abram and Brigitte Le Normand for their helpful comments.

Introduction

In 1961, shortly after New Year's Day, the Rijeka-based newspaper *Novi List* published a short story with the meaningful title, "Escape across the Border."² The piece was about Mika and Štef, two young people from a village in the landlocked Croatian region of Zagorje. They happened to meet a Yugoslav photographer who epitomized a stereotypical character from the West. He wore tight trousers, sported a Brando-style haircut, and—uncoincidentally—smuggled people across the border. Mika and Štef made a deal for him to help them sneak across the border. They would pay him half of what he asked before they left, with the rest to be paid after they got to Italy. After changing trains three times, they arrived close to the border and crossed over through a barbed-wire fence. The smuggler triumphantly announced they had reached their destination without any shooting, bloodshed, or arrests, and then asked for the remainder of his money. After paying him, Mika and Štef hugged each other and celebrated leaving their previous lives behind, even though they soon realized the smuggler had also made off with their last few dollars. But they were so astonished by all the factories, brand new cars, and big ships they saw, that they soon forgot this unpleasant detail. Trieste really looked like what they had imagined it to be. After stepping a bar in which they could hear Italian, Croatian, and other Yugoslav languages, they immediately struck up a conversation with a man, apparently from Vojvodina, whom they thought to be a fellow defector. When asked about the situation, he emphasized that everything was fine, nobody was unemployed, and the standard of living was high. After a couple of misunderstandings, the situation became clear. They had not ended up in Trieste. They were in Rijeka, and the barbed-wire fence they had crossed was that of the 3rd May Shipyard.

108

This short story was written as a deliberate part of a propaganda campaign by the Yugoslav press to discourage aspirant defectors.³ Usually, these articles stressed the dire conditions escapees encountered in Italian refugee camps and harsh treatment by the Italian police, and identified what they regarded as "illegal emigration" with moral decay. This short story, however, presented a slightly different discourse. In fact, its main argument was that Trieste was not worth escaping to because Rijeka itself *was* Trieste, and not just because the two Adriatic ports resembled each other to some extent. Rijeka was a city of opportunities, just as Trieste was perceived to be in the minds of many defectors, and it was able to attract migrants rather than suffer the consequences of its own inhabitants leaving in large numbers. Rijeka's attraction was attested to by the presence of migrants from other Yugoslav areas, even relatively affluent ones such as the Serbian region of Vojvodina.

Migration into and out of the city were two sides of the same coin. They occurred simultaneously yet were also intertwined. In this article I argue that an analysis of their entanglement will contribute to a better

² Frane Bodilo, "Bijeg preko granice," *Novi List*, January 6, 1961, 3.

³ See for example "Sloboda gladovanja," *Riječki List*, February 29, 1952, 3; "Italija vraća one, koji ilegalno prelaze granicu," *Novi List*, August 24, 1957, 1.

understanding of the challenges Rijeka faced after the Second World War. After being part of Zone B administered by the Yugoslav Army starting in 1945, it was officially integrated into the Yugoslav Federation in 1947, and the social texture of the city was reshaped by a mass departure of locals and by an influx of newcomers. For almost two decades, Rijeka was, for many, a place to be left behind in search of a better life and a less oppressive environment, whereas for many others it represented a port of opportunities that similarly promised a new start.

Although historiography needed a long time to historicize the labeling process underpinning the use of categories such as refugee or economic migrant, a large body of research that examines these aspects critically has now been established. This has allowed historians to take steps toward a joint analysis of both forced and voluntary migration. Despite being careful in stressing the agency of people on the move and consequently analyzing their departure as a spontaneous or a compulsory decision, work by historians and political scientists has investigated the blurred boundary between political and economic motivations to leave, as well as expulsion drives triggered by economic factors. When the Cold War matrix is at play, the same phenomena are worth comparing in Western and Eastern Europe.⁴

Some studies have emphasized the role of migration in shaping the identity of urban centers after a massive departure of their population, as happened in many Eastern European cities after 1945.⁵ Other studies have emphasized how migrations consolidated community boundaries through governments granting citizenship or residence permits.⁶ The need to investigate population movements holistically in order to show how closely they were intertwined is often complemented by a long-term perspective that also focuses on continuities rather than solely on ruptures alone.⁷ A comprehensive analysis of the stratification and coexistence of different migration flows should also consider engaging not only with the immigration policy of the country of emigration, but also with the tools deployed by the countries of origin to regulate, prevent, or encourage the emigration of their citizens.⁸ A new turn in the history of Eastern Europe has led some to argue that there is a need to reconsider Eastern Europe as also being a space of refuge or labor emigration, and not merely an area that

⁴ Peter Gatrell, *The Unsettling of Europe. The Great Migration, 1945 to Present* (London: Allen Lane, 2019).

⁵ Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Gregor Thum, *Uprooted: How Breslau Became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists* (Ithaca - London: Cornell University Press, 2016).

⁶ Pamela Ballinger, *The World Refugees Made: Decolonization and the Foundation of Postwar Italy* (Ithaca - London: Cornell University Press, 2020).

⁷ Ulf Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe: Emigrants, America, and the State Since the Late Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016).

⁸ Nancy L. Green and Francois Weil, eds., *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

triggered forced and voluntary migrations.⁹ This is also the case with Rijeka, a city that was constantly reshaped by bidirectional population movements throughout the twentieth century. Even before the end of the Second World War, Rijeka had witnessed its autochthonous inhabitants departing for the Italian peninsula. This movement gained unprecedented momentum after 1947, with locals either choosing Italy or leaving for the Western Bloc without authorization, a phenomenon that continued well into the 1960s. As time went by, the escapees were less often locals and increasingly newcomers who used this Adriatic city as a springboard to overseas destinations. At the same time, Rijeka attracted workers and professionals from other regions of Croatia (and from the other Yugoslav republics) who found employment and started a new life there. International migration paths also brought new inhabitants to Rijeka. This was the case with returnees who came back to Yugoslavia after the Second World War and leftist Italian workers who came predominantly—but not exclusively—from the border area. In this article, I will attempt to show how deeply intertwined their stories were.

A Border Shift and Opting for Italy

As a booming industrial city and a port hub constantly in need of labor and capital, over the centuries Rijeka attracted thousands of migrant workers along with merchants, industrialists, and experts from the surrounding Habsburg lands and beyond. Moreover, from the early twentieth century on (if not earlier), and especially after the establishment of a passenger ship service run by the Cunard Line, Rijeka gained a reputation as a departure city for those wishing to travel to North America from the Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy.¹⁰ Although the city largely lost its strategic position and the cosmopolitan allure it had had under Italian rule after it became economically marginalized, it continued to attract new inhabitants, especially, but not exclusively, from the Italian Kingdom. At the same time, nationalism and exclusionary measures led many Croats and Slovenes to find refuge in the neighboring Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (renamed Yugoslavia in 1929) or to emigrate abroad. While this phenomenon dates to D'Annunzio's rule in 1919–1920, it gained momentum in the 1930s, driven by a climate of discrimination under the Fascist regime in combination with the effects of economic crisis. The border between the towns of Fiume in Italy and Sušak in

110

⁹ Włodzimierz Borodziej and Joachim von Puttkamer, *Immigrants and Foreigners in Central and Eastern Europe during the Twentieth Century* (Abingdon, OX – New York, NY: Routledge, 2020); see also the ERC project *Unlikely Refuge? Refugees and Citizens in East-Central Europe in the 20th Century* (P.I. Michal Frankl, Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences).

¹⁰ William Klinger, "La Cunard nel Quarnero: la linea Fiume – New York (1904–1914)," *Quaderni del Centro di Ricerche Storiche di Rovigno*, 22 (2011): 7–45; Ervin Dubrović, *Merika: Iseljavanje iz srednje Europe u Ameriku 1880.–1914. / Emigration from Central Europe to America 1880–1914* (Rijeka: Muzej grada Rijeke, 2008).

Yugoslavia became one of the most popular sites for illegal border crossings.¹¹ However, nothing shook the city's fabric quite as deeply as the aftermath of the Second World War. Between late 1947 and early 1948, the new city of Rijeka was symbolically created by uniting the two former border towns of Fiume and Sušak, which had different yet interconnected histories and memories. The establishment of the socialist regime uprooted old practices, hierarchies, and habits. Repression initiated by the national security agency (OZNA) against those regarded as "enemies of the people" included arrests, dismissals, and in the aftermath of the war, even executions—all of which shocked various parts of society.¹² While the city was successful in quickly reconstructing infrastructure bombed during the war, the population's quality of life did not recover as swiftly. The revolutionary élan of the people's struggle soon turned into a bureaucratic regime that applied political pressure to those who were noncompliant. Expropriations went hand in hand with other measures that often involved consistent coercion.

Many locals, who mostly identified themselves as Italians, did not see any prospects for themselves in the new Yugoslav city and decided to leave spontaneously at first, and then later opted for Italian citizenship.¹³ The reasons that probably led to this decision ranged from discrimination and persecution by the local Party cadres, to a harsh and oppressive political atmosphere accompanied by striking poverty in the city. In short, unwillingness to live under Yugoslav rule was widespread, and it was driven by the perception of being culturally superior to the Croatian population and resistance toward the reversal of established hierarchies.

According to some research, roughly 20,000 people left before the right to choose Italian citizenship was granted in 1947.¹⁴ Among the first to leave the city were those who had moved to Rijeka from Italy during the interwar period.¹⁵ These figures do not include the illegal departures that started immediately after the end of the conflict. After a period of official bilingualism, which ended when the Italian language was marginalized during the 1953 Trieste crisis, this huge outflow, referred to as *esodo* in

¹¹ Mihael Sobelevski, *D'Annunzijeva vladavina u Rijeci (rujan 1919.-siječanj 1921.) – prvi egzodus Hrvata*, in *Talijanska uprava na hrvatskom prostoru i egzodus Hrvata (1918.-1943.): zbornik radova s Međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa, Zagreb 22.-23. listopada 1997.*, ed. Marino Manin (Zagreb: Hrvatski Institut za povijest: Društvo Egzodus istarskih Hrvata, 2001), 287-99; Darko Dukovski, "Dva egzodusa: hrvatski (1919.-1941.) i talijanski (1943.-1955.)," *Adrias: zbornik radova Zavoda za znanstveni i umjetnički rad Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Splitu*, no. 15 (2008): 129-65.

¹² Andrea Roknić Bežanić, "Uspostava i organizacija civilnih i vojnih vlasti u poslijeratnoj Rijeci," *Časopis za povijest Zapadne Hrvatske*, no. 6-7 (2012): 163-77; Orietta Moscarda, "La 'giustizia del popolo': sequestri e confische a Fiume nel secondo dopoguerra (1946-1948)," *Qualestoria* 25, no.1 (1997): 209-23.

¹³ The 1947 Peace Treaty allowed the former Italian citizens of the areas allocated to other countries to choose Italian citizenship and move to Italy within the space of a year. See Cristina Columni et al., *Storia di un esodo: Istria 1945-1956* (Trieste: Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1980), 325-36.

¹⁴ Olinto Mileta Mattiuz, *Popolazioni dell'Istria, Fiume, Zara e Dalmazia, 1850-2002: ipotesi di quantificazione demografica* (Trieste, A.D.E.S., 2005), 138-39.

¹⁵ See the lists in: Državni arhiv u Rijeci (DARI), Gradski narodni odbor Rijeka (323), k. 117.

Italian historiography, radically changed the city's linguistic landscape.¹⁶ The right to choose Italian citizenship, included in the 1947 Italian Peace Treaty, was available from March/April 1948 to February 1949. It was also available for another short period in 1951. However, as the local authorities had the final say regarding applications and there were abuses, some applications were refused. According to data from the city committee of the Communist Party, by June 1949 a total of 13,544 inhabitants of Rijeka had applied for Italian citizenship, with 5,571 requests rejected. In the end, out of 4,522 appeals, 3,799 were approved.¹⁷ As the authorities admitted, discretionary criteria informed many decisions, and this likely increased a sense of oppression among those who opted for it (known as *optanti*), as they often faced discriminatory measures, were dismissed from their workplaces, and were deprived of their crucial ration cards. As the Rijeka-born writer Marisa Madieri recalled,

My family opted for Italy, and we were faced with a year of exclusion and persecution. We were kicked out of our flat and forced to live in a room with all of our belonging piled up in it. The furniture had been sold in preparation for the exodus. My dad lost his job, and just before we left, he was imprisoned for having hidden two suitcases belonging to a victim of political persecution who had attempted to leave the country illegally and who named him when he was apprehended.¹⁸

112

In most cases, those who chose to leave left their previous lives behind, but in some cases their trajectories were far from linear or unidirectional. Although a thorough analysis of this phenomenon is still needed, it is also worth noting that some who left later decided to return to Yugoslavia. This choice, which was likely driven by disappointment with the conditions encountered in Italian refugee camps, was often exploited for propaganda purposes.¹⁹

When the right to choose one's citizenship was granted again briefly in 1951, several former groups from the Italian minority's institutions chose to leave, as did skilled personnel.²⁰ The Yugoslav authorities' attitude toward these *optanti* oscillated. Sometimes, they displayed an openly discriminatory stance that ended up hastening their departure, while in other cases they tried to convince them not to emigrate. It is undisputable that, at the highpoint of the departures, the authorities felt unable to prevent a population drain that also included skilled workers who were desperately

¹⁶ Marco Abram, "Nazionalità, lingua e territorio nel socialismo jugoslavo: il bilinguismo a Fiume (1947-1955)," *Qualestoria* 46, no. 1, (2018), 93-113; Raoul Pupo, *Fiume città di passione* (Bari: Laterza, 2018), 247-60.

¹⁷ DARI, Gradski komitet Saveza komunista Hrvatske (209), k. 28, Organizaciono-politički izvještaj GK KPH Rijeka, June 30, 1949, 8. Orietta Moscarda, "Fiume nel vortice della repressione cominformista e delle opzioni (1949-1951)," *Quaderni del Centro di Ricerche Storiche di Rovigno*, 31(2020): 69-76.

¹⁸ Marisa Madieri, *Verde acqua* (Torino: Einaudi, 1987), 42.

¹⁹ "Sve više optanata za jugoslavensko državljanstvo," *Riječki List*, January 23, 1952, 2.

²⁰ Ezio Giuricin, Luciano Giuricin, *La comunità nazionale italiana. Vol. 1 Storia e istituzioni degli italiani dell'Istria, Fiume e Dalmazia (1944-2006)* (Rovigno: Centro di ricerche storiche, 2008), 166-68.

needed but who had also expected to benefit from the new regime.²¹ Up until spring 1946 it was relatively easy to enter Zone A, which was controlled by the Allied Military Government. Later, however, crossing the border became increasingly difficult²² and escape became the only way—albeit a dangerous one—for many to reach Trieste and then either gain access to Italian territory or emigrate. Fleeing across the border was the last strategy to which some *optanti* turned if their request to leave was refused.²³

Escapes across the border

Italian historiography has focused mainly on the mass departure of individuals identifying as Italians, but it has often failed to explore the simultaneous migration flows that involved individuals of different nationalities. The stress on the uniqueness of the “exodus” experience, combined with the idea that it was driven predominantly by national sentiment, likely prevented many historians from exploring the coexistence of these two phenomena. Nevertheless, some contemporaries did not ignore this. One example was the writer Enrico Morovich, who recalled the story of a Croat based in Rijeka who defected and ended up in the Bagnoli refugee camp before emigrating to Canada. Morovich stressed how unbearable the conditions were, even for those (in his view, Croats) who should have benefited from the new regime.²⁴

In the postwar years, thousands escaped from Rijeka to Italy and, in some cases, emigrated to other western countries. Once they reached Italian territory, national identity was supposed to determine their migration paths. Italians were considered national citizens, while all others were categorized as foreign refugees. However, in Rijeka, as in other bordering regions where Italian was widely spoken, the criteria used to define nationality were contentious and tended to be superseded by citizenship. Former Italian citizens were often regarded *de facto* as national refugees.²⁵

Despite being more acute in the border areas, the phenomenon of defections affected the entire Yugoslav Federation. After the Second World War, this was hardly unique among the socialist countries that, apart from trusted functionaries and few other privileged figures, deprived their citizens of freedom of movement. Despite its later liberalization drive, which eventually allowed citizens to seek employment abroad starting in the 1960s, Yugoslavia’s stance on external migration initially kept to the Soviet position of not permitting any outflow of workers. The lack of freedom to travel came to symbolize the oppressive nature of socialist regimes that were unable to

²¹ Columi et al., *Storia di un esodo*, 325–36.

²² Giovanni Stelli, *La memoria che vive. Fiume, interviste e testimonianze* (Roma: Società di studi fiumani – Archivio museo storico di Fiume, 2008), 64, 282–83.

²³ DARI, 209, k. 28, Organizaciono-politički izvještaj GK KPH Rijeka, June 30, 1949.

²⁴ Enrico Morovich, *Un italiano di Fiume* (Milano: Rusconi, 1993), 165–67.

²⁵ On sorting out national and foreign refugees, see Pamela Ballinger, “National Refugees, Displaced Persons, and the Reconstruction of Italy: The Case of Trieste,” in *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944–49*, ed. Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (Basingstone: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 115–40; Francesca Rolandi, “Rotte di transito. Profughi jugoslavi nell’Italia del secondo dopoguerra,” *Memoria e ricerca*, no. 2 (2019), 349–70.

keep their citizens within their borders without relying on force, a feature exploited in western Cold War narratives.²⁶ Attention has often been focused on clear-cut narratives, which avoids a critical assessment of storytelling and external narratives. Thus there is still a lack of studies focusing on the detailed context of the refugees' country or countries of origin, or on the process of negotiation (or lack thereof) between the inhabitants and the local authorities.

From the mid-1950s, after Italy joined the 1951 Refugee Convention, Yugoslav defectors went through a screening process to be recognized as eligible for asylum. Regardless of the applications' outcomes, the majority were able to emigrate. However, a limited number of ineligible Yugoslavs began to be deported, which was justified by classifying the applicants as purely economic refugees.

Personal life paths and escapees' statements tell a story of widespread disaffection with the state fueled by political opposition, and a perceived lack of any prospects in their hometowns. In some cases, political and economic motivations were deeply intertwined, as was the case of small business owners who found themselves at odds with the socialist system.²⁷ Because of its proximity to the Italian border, and because its port was an open window to the outside world, Rijeka became a hub for those who wanted to go to the Western Bloc. In contrast to many coastal towns, except for sailors who defected at foreign ports, escapes from Rijeka usually took place over land.²⁸

Because those attempting to escape across the border accounted for more than half of all convictions,²⁹ in the early 1950s Rijeka's prison was crowded with aspirant defectors. An initial change in attitude was noticed in 1956 when, according to the testimonies that escapees made public after they arrived in Italy, imprisonment was often replaced with administrative fines, and intelligence-service (UDBA) officials reached out to aspirant escapees in order to convince them to stay by stressing improvements in Yugoslavia's economic situation.³⁰ It is likely that this soft approach contributed to an increase in illegal border crossings and to a much higher number of arrests by police and the local authorities. In 1957, a year when defections peaked, 1,574 successful escapes and attempts to flee from Rijeka were reported.³¹

114

²⁶ Susan L. Carruthers, *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape, and Brainwashing* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009).

²⁷ Branislava Vojnović, ed., *Zapisnici Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske, 1952.- 1954.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2008), Zapisnik sjednice Izvršnog komiteta CK SKH Hrvatske, održane 3.XII.1954. godine u Zagrebu, 181.

²⁸ Brigitte Le Normand, "Rijeka as a Socialist Port: Insights from Jugolinija's Early Years, 1947-1960," *International Journal of Maritime History*, 33, no. 1(2021), 193-208.

²⁹ In 1951 the average sentence was one year of prison. Branislava Vojnović, ed., *Zapisnici Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske, 1949.-1952.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski državni Arhiv, 2008), Zapisnik nastavka sjednice biroa CK KP Hrvatske održane 8. rujna 1952. g. u Zagrebu, 990.

³⁰ Archivio della Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (APCM), Ufficio Zone di Confine, sez. II, FVG Trieste, b. 58 vol. II, f. 6/6.

³¹ Hrvatski državni arhiv (HDA), Republički sekretarijat za pravosudne poslove SRH(1984), k. 75, Godišnji izvještaj o radu javnog tužilaštva u 1957., February 21, 1958, 5.

The relaxation of repressive measures was probably not enough to explain such pressure on the western borders of Yugoslavia. Starting in the mid-1950s, unemployment began increasing for the first time after investments were made into reconstruction and infrastructure, and it would become a chronic issue in Yugoslavia.³² This also affected the industrial and port city of Rijeka, which was known for its good employment opportunities. However, unemployment was not the only issue. Low salaries for unskilled workers were a constant source of discontent. Of the 143 people sentenced for attempting to defect that year, about a hundred of them mentioned poor economic conditions and a desire for better wages as their main reasons for fleeing. For example, a female worker referred to having been laid off from the Učka distillery. A male worker employed at the Vulkan manufacturing company complained of barely being able to afford room and board. This allegedly pushed him to look for a better life abroad, and he had relied on the experience of some acquaintances who had defected to Austria. Another male worker complained it was impossible to live on the salary he received from the Torpedo factory. Escapees also laid bare societal disfunction. Two young boys from the Silvije Bakarčić boarding school, both of whom were children of Partisans and victims of fascism, attended a training course at the school attached to the 3rd May shipyard. They were not accepted back into their school dormitory after the summer holidays, and they consequently decided to defect, thus depriving the city of prospective skilled workers.³³ In this case, as in others, the authorities blamed themselves for having neglected workers' needs, and especially those of the youngest, who made up the majority of all escapees.

115

While it is understandable that, after being apprehended, escapees would recount a narrative of economically driven emigration to the authorities rather than mentioning any opposition to the Yugoslav political system, their accounts were nevertheless considered reliable, since many of them seemed to be not even marginally involved in politics. Defections were a generational phenomenon—for instance, in 1956 alone, 152 minors tried to cross the border illegally.³⁴ The authorities also recognized that discontent with the state was grounded in low salaries, grim working conditions, poor workplace standards, and a lack of housing. This last issue was the primary reason for this discontent.³⁵

Attempts to escape were triggered by disappointment and frustration, as well as by aspirations for an imagined better life abroad. The West, which was seen as starting from Trieste and extending across the ocean, was particularly attractive. Many Yugoslav defectors would apply for asylum and wait to be resettled in Canada, the US, South America, or Australia. At some point, defection set off a chain reaction that has been

³² Susan L. Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment. The Political Economy of Yugoslavia* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995): 191-200.

³³ HDA, Savez komunista Hrvatske. Centralni komitet (1220), D-Dokumentacija, Katalog I, Organizaciono-Politički Sekretarijat (2.3.1.7), f. 126, Problem bijega u inostranstvo, 15.

³⁴ "Zapuštenost maloljetnika, alkoholizam i prostitucija," *Novi List*, June 7, 1957, 2.

³⁵ DARI, Općinski komitet Saveza komunista Hrvatske Stari grad (221), k. 13, Zapisnik sa sastanka Općinskog komiteta, November 27, 1956.

referred to as an “atmosphere of escape.”³⁶ Those who had reached the West indirectly enticed other people to leave by disseminating successful stories, both in letters to family and friends and during visits to their former homes once their status abroad was resolved. This was combined with a readily available network of smugglers and widespread empathy within the community toward fugitives. The situation at Vulkan, a foundry and factory for ship equipment from which twenty employees attempted to escape in 1956, was illustrative of many factories rather than an exception.³⁷ Rijeka’s adjustment to a shift in sovereignty from Italy to Yugoslavia and to a new political system required a long transition and led to significant changes in the city’s demography.

Internal migration and the resettlement process

The challenge of bringing about Rijeka’s economic recovery, which became crucial in the aftermath of the Second World War, entailed not only reconstructing the infrastructure destroyed by the war, but also repositioning the city within a new, multinational federation. As part of Socialist Yugoslavia from 1947, Rijeka regained its hinterland. The earlier annexation to Italy had cut the city off from its commercial hinterland and forced it to compete with the port of Trieste. There had been an economic recovery in the 1930s when the Italian colonial wars resulted in increased demand from the military that boosted industrial production, but by 1945 devastation from the Second World War had turned the city into a tabula rasa. In a low-technology economy, reconstruction was to be achieved through intensive use of labor, meaning that of migrants who were meant to fill the gaps created by mass emigration.

How the settlement of land within Yugoslavia previously inhabited by the German minority was managed has been the focus of several studies³⁸ and has also depicted in popular culture (for example in Veljko Bulajić’s movie *Vlak bez voznog reda* [Train without a Timetable]), but apart from some recent studies on the Slovenian Littoral, migration flows into the Adriatic regions newly integrated into the Yugoslav state still need to be researched in detail.³⁹ Archival sources provide a picture of how disorganized the resettlement process was in the areas that shifted from Italy to Yugoslavia. Population movements were fueled by spontaneous searches for a better quality of life rather than being the result of measures enacted by Yugoslav authorities. The findings in international scholarship confirm this by sketching out the chaotic implementation of repopulation plans even in

³⁶ Tatjana Šarić, “Bijeg iz socijalističke Jugoslavije – ilegalna emigracija iz Hrvatske od 1945. do početka šezdesetih godina 20. stoljeća,” *Migracijske i etničke teme* 21, no. 2 (2015), 205.

³⁷ DARI, Općinski komitet Saveza komunista Hrvatske Sušak (222), k. 9, Izvještaj o političkoj situaciji na općini Sušak.

³⁸ Nikola L. Gačeša, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Bačkoj: 1918.-1941.* (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, Odeljenje za društvene nauke, 1968); Marijan Maticka, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1948.* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga: Stvarnost, 1990).

³⁹ Katja Hrobat Virloget, “Breme preteklosti: spomini na sobivanje in migracije v slovenski Istri po drugi svetovni vojni,” *Acta Histriae* 23, no. 3 (2015): 531-54; Aleksej Kalc, “The Other Side of the ‘Istrian Exodus’: Immigration and Social Restoration in Slovenian Coastal Towns in the 1950s,” *Dve Domovini* 49 (2019): 145-62.

regions where a process of “ethnic engineering” was explicitly carried out.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the Yugoslav authorities encouraged internal migration to fill in the many job vacancies that were negatively affecting the economy and preventing economic plans from being implemented. This was true of almost all workplaces, including the most strategic factories such as the Torpedo factory, which by 1949 had already lost three hundred workers, including ninety highly skilled ones.⁴¹ Skilled professionals and workers were among the first to migrate to Rijeka. They were needed for Yugoslav state structures, as were teaching personnel⁴² who enjoyed significant support from the government and placement in good housing.

The different receptions these diverse groups experienced is exemplified by the story of the Petrović and Milošević families, both originating from Belgrade. In the first case, the father, a radio communications expert, was sent to Rijeka in 1947 to work at Jugolinija, a cargo shipping line. According to his family's recollections, they were shown several empty apartments to choose from in the city center. Much needed professionals often experienced a smooth integration process; yet for many newcomers with different professional backgrounds, access to decent housing proved to be a long and painful journey. This was the case for the Milošević family, whose father was a tailor. As generally happened with artisans, he faced a hostile atmosphere and was never able to obtain a permit to open a shop. He and his family ended up living in a shared apartment with other tenants.⁴³ After the war ended, many artisans from all over Yugoslavia submitted requests to the local authorities for a permit to start a business in Rijeka. These were usually rejected because of an established prejudice against private economic initiatives.⁴⁴

For many Rijeka was the site of a new beginning, but for many others resettlement in the city was meant to be temporary as part of operational plans implemented by the Federal Ministry of Labor to provide local industry with the workforce it urgently needed. When regional migration paths could not provide enough labor, political bodies turned to other areas, initially within the Croatian republic and especially in Dalmatia. The Rijeka-based writer Nedjeljko Fabrio illustrated this in his acclaimed novel *Vježbanje života* (Practicing Life), when he described a small steamship that sailed between Rijeka with Dalmatia every Tuesday and Thursday, bringing many newcomers to the city.⁴⁵ A more concrete illustration comes from a document stating that in June 1949, 300 workers were to be sent from the small town of Imotski to be employed at Asfalt Rijeka, 150 from Jelsa (on the island of

⁴⁰ Zdenek Radvanovsky, “The Social and Economic Consequences of Resettling Czechs into Northwestern Bohemia, 1945-1947,” in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, ed. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 244-46; Thum, *Uprooted*, 60.

⁴¹ DARI, Općinski komitet SKH Zamet (223), k. 26, 2, Zapisnici OO SK 1949, Politički izvještaj Torpedo 1949, 1.

⁴² Kalc, “The Other Side,” 152.

⁴³ Interviews with Slobodan Petrović and Miodrag Milošević, June 2020. The author would like to thank the Rijeka branch of the association Prosvjeta for the valuable help provided.

⁴⁴ DARI, 323, k. 117, Verbale della seduta del CP cittadino di Fiume, December 16, 1945, 2.

⁴⁵ Nedjeljko Fabrio, *Vježbanje života - Smrt Vronskog* (Zagreb: Mozaik, 2013), 231.

Hvar) were to be employed at Kvarner Rijeka, and a further 278 from the coastal town of Šibenik were to be sent to Rijeka's port.⁴⁶ By the 1950s, the federal government was faced with a lack of both professionals and unskilled laborers, which was preventing companies from meeting the objectives laid out as part of the planned economy. Members of youth organizations were sent out as recruiters (*agitatori*) to find new workers, but they were often not able to provide the main companies with the required number of workers.⁴⁷

One of the companies most in need of labor was the port. Because of the low level of mechanization, it employed mainly unskilled workers at that time. In 1946 industries in Rijeka deemed to be strategic were provided with five hundred prisoners of war in addition to the five hundred already allocated after the city was liberated.⁴⁸ Some of them were Yugoslav ethnic Germans (*folksdojčeri*) who had been captured by the Yugoslav army while fighting in enemy units, but others were foreign citizens. Prisoners of war were still being exploited in large numbers in July 1948, but starting in October 1948 they were gradually let go and released.⁴⁹ Even if they were entitled to retain their employment—and some of them who had established relationships in Yugoslavia apparently did—it can be assumed that most left, and in combination with the *optanti*, resulted in an even smaller available workforce.

Over the next decade, temporary labor mobility often led to stable employment as migrants found a new home in Rijeka. Although the Italian part of the population had decreased dramatically, the city gained new migrants from a variety of regional and ethnic backgrounds, and an influx of workers primarily from other areas of Croatia. This included both those who had historically gravitated toward Rijeka and others who came from further away, such as from other republics. The number of inhabitants, which totaled 75,328 in 1953 despite the departure of the *optanti*, skyrocketed to 100,889 by 1961 and 132,222 by 1971.⁵⁰ Migration rather than natural population growth was the main force driving Rijeka's increase in size. In 1961 only 35 percent of inhabitants had been born in the city. This percentage steadily decreased, and in 1962 alone, 6,500 new people moved to the city.⁵¹

The influx of newcomers led to the expansion of some ethnic communities, as was the case with the Serbian community, which totaled 4,028 according to the 1953 census,⁵² reached 11,032 in 1961,⁵³ and further grew to

⁴⁶ Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), Ministarstvo rada FNRJ (25), b. 127, Zaduženje za mjesec juni za oblast Dalmacije.

⁴⁷ AJ, 25, b. 153, Radna snaga za Luka [sic] Rijeku, September 27, 1949.

⁴⁸ DARI, 323, k. 117, Izvještaj rada od 3.5.1945 do 20.11.1946 GN Rijeka Odjel trgovine i opskrbe; Saša Ilić, *Stranci „gastarbajteri“*. *Strana stručna radna snaga u privredi Jugoslavije 1945–1950* (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, 2020), 221.

⁴⁹ AJ, 25, b. 127, Nedostatak radne snage na Rijeci, August 2, 1948; AJ, 25, b. 152, Vlada Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije, Predsjedništvo, Ministarstvu rada FNRJ, October 19, 1948.

⁵⁰ Branimir Strenja et al., eds., *Rijeka i regija u Titovo doba* (Rijeka: Društvo "Josip Broz Tito," 2012), 172.

⁵¹ "Tek svaki treći rođen u Rijeci," *Novi List*, March 10, 1964, 4.

⁵² *Popis stanovništva 1953. Knjiga 11* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1960), 475.

⁵³ *Popis stanovništva 1961. Rezultati za opštine. Knjiga 6* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1967), 86.

15,118 by 1971.⁵⁴ When looking at statistics from the census, one should also note that the number of individuals who did not declare themselves as belonging to a specific ethnic group or who declared themselves as Yugoslav, were more likely to not be ethnic Croats. In some cases, the emigrants' geographical origin coincided with their level of qualification: migrants from the southern republics and rural areas were usually lesser skilled. Southern republics and provinces such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo were significant sources of unskilled workers for the flourishing construction sector.⁵⁵

Locals who were about to leave lived alongside newcomers, sometimes sharing the same houses or workplaces where they interacted with each other and established contacts. Large state factories often became places of conflict between colleagues as well as ones of coexistence. The first migrants from other Yugoslav regions were required to attend an Italian language course, and they had to be able to communicate with their coworkers, who were oftentimes the very same skilled workers they would replace.⁵⁶ But more often than not, the newcomers filled vacancies. They integrated well into the new system, and they settled into dwellings abandoned by those who had left the country, and which had been nationalized by the Yugoslav government.

International immigration and the role of ideology

While Rijeka's booming economy became a powerful draw within Yugoslavia, politics also played a crucial—albeit not exclusive—role in prompting cross-border migration into the country. Ideological proximity was an important factor for returnees, who were usually politically progressive Yugoslav emigrants who had settled abroad and decided to return after 1945 to build a new Yugoslavia or to spend their retirement in their place of origin. Besides being used as a propaganda tool, the return of former migrants was also used to attract skilled laborers.

A campaign to attract more returnees was promoted by the Federal Ministry of Labor in cooperation with the Office (later Department) for Emigrants based in Zagreb. It was followed by the inauguration of two ships, the *Partizanka* and *Radnik*, to transport emigrants back to Yugoslavia. Even though turnout was lower than expected,⁵⁷ the arrival of the two ships was still heavily promoted as a symbol of the new Yugoslavia's power of attraction. Rijeka became one of the main destinations for some of the 16,128 returnees.⁵⁸ Many skilled and semi-skilled workers found employment in military industries, and many others ended up in the construction and logistics

⁵⁴ *Popis stanovništva i stanova 1971. Stanovništvo. Knjiga 6* (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1974), 14.

⁵⁵ DARI, Kotarski odbor SSRNH (229), Stanovništvo i zaposlenost na području kotara Rijeka 1964.

⁵⁶ Interview with Pavle Bogović, September 2020.

⁵⁷ For instance, less than half of the 12,000 returnees projected in 1948 returned to Yugoslavia. Marica Karakaš Obradov, *Novi mozaici nacija u "novim poredcima": migracije stanovništva na hrvatskom području tijekom Drugoga svjetskog rata i poraća* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2014), 111.

⁵⁸ Karakaš Obradov, *Novi mozaici nacija u "novim poredcima,"* 110-12; Brunnbauer, *Globalizing Southeastern Europe*, 263-69.

sectors. A small number of professionals were employed in accordance with their professional backgrounds.⁵⁹ Later, when Yugoslavia emerged from the difficulties of the postwar economy, other former emigrants returned on their own initiative.

The returnees often posed a problem for cities already dealing with housing shortages, as they mostly preferred to resettle in urban centers rather than in their places of origin. This issue regarding returnees and housing was not just a matter of new inhabitants placing a burden on the local housing sector. It also concerned the quality of housing. As was often a matter for discussion, returnees usually came back from countries with higher living standards, and they consequently found the poor condition of most of the housing unbearable. Even though many inhabitants still lacked proper accommodation, in 1947 the city authorities felt compelled to intervene in the construction of fifteen new barracks and sixty apartments to accommodate returnees.⁶⁰

A glance at the origins of many returnees may offer insights into the networks linking Rijeka globally with its surroundings. Besides those who came from the main epicenters of Croatian migration, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and Argentina, less conventional migration paths also emerged. This was true of Ivan Berić, a returnee from Romania who worked as a captain on the Danube and who had allegedly refused to renounce his Yugoslav citizenship. Emigrants from less conventional destinations were less likely to have been manual workers, were more likely to have held privileged positions, and had more difficulties adjusting to the lower living standards they encountered in Yugoslavia, which were still higher than those of most newcomers. This was true of Milan Smolčić, a returnee from Egypt who complained about being housed in an unhealthy apartment they shared with another family, in which his wife immediately began suffering from rheumatism and a fellow tenant was sick with tuberculosis. As he stressed in a request to obtain an apartment, they were used to living in a comfortable apartment back in Egypt, and it was "quite hard to live in a such a dark place."⁶¹

Among those who chose to return to Rijeka, one was destined to play a significant role in the city's history. After emigrating to Canada, the Rijeka-born Edo Jardas achieved a prominent position in the local communist party and participated in the Spanish Civil War. He decided to return to Rijeka in 1948 on the eve of the Cominform resolution. He served four terms as the president of the People's Committee in Rijeka (a position equivalent to mayor) starting in 1952. As he put it in a later interview, "just as we went to help the Spanish working class with weapons, [so too did I] help the Yugoslav working class to rebuild their torched and ravaged land."⁶²

⁵⁹ DARI, Narodni odbor grada Rijeke 1947-1952 (86), k. 43, Izvještaj za mjesec kolovoz 1948. O radu službe inspekcije rada, 3.

⁶⁰ AJ, 25, b. 111, Narodna Republika Hrvatska, Ministarstvo rada, Odjel za iseljenike, Ministarstvu rada FNR Jugoslavije, Sekretarijatu, August 9, 1948; Ministarstvo rada FNRJ, Odeljenje za iseljenike, Ministarstvu rada NR Hrvatske, Iseljeničkom odjelu, May 23, 1948.

⁶¹ DARI, 86, k. 630, Molba za dodjelu stana, Milan Smolčić, January 9, 1952.

⁶² Darko Stuparić, "Edo Jardas: Partija me nije kovala da ljubim ruke", in DARI, Edo Jardas (389), k. 4.

The symbolic ideological connotation inherent in migration was attested to by the simultaneous arrival of communists from Italy who were attracted to the new Yugoslav system and the availability of jobs for skilled laborers. The most popular instance was that of the *monfalconesi*, skilled workers from the Monfalcone shipyard who mainly arrived in Yugoslavia in 1947. However, they did not represent the totality of immigrants from Italy. There were also many Italian teachers who came to Yugoslavia from the border region and from other Italian areas,⁶³ along with cultural workers who moved to Yugoslavia to work at Italian language institutions in Rijeka ranging from the newspaper *La Voce del popolo* to the Italian Theater. While Rijeka was by no means unique in Yugoslavia, it by and large hosted more Italian workers than others and served as a transit point for immigrants from Italy who had to be relocated to other Yugoslav cities.⁶⁴

Recent research has brought to light a complex picture with several categories of Italian workers coming to Yugoslavia. They drew on support from the Italian Communist Party at the state or local level. Rather than organize the flow, the authorities attempted to channel—and limit—the pressure to emigrate from below. The spontaneous nature of some of these trajectories likely led the Yugoslav authorities to establish a camp where Italian emigrants were evaluated and then potentially allocated a workplace.⁶⁵ Those who came to Rijeka, even for a short time, were just a small number of the many Italians who submitted requests to the Yugoslav authorities requesting to be employed. Left-wing sentiments may have been a precondition, but other motivations were likely intertwined with them. Economic discrimination against former partisans and activists pushed many workers from the border area to seek out a better life across the border.⁶⁶

Many biographies resembled that of Antonietta De Simone, a young woman from Naples who submitted a request to the Rijeka Party Committee in 1947. In it she stated that she had been part of the communist underground during the Fascist period, and that she had served as a partisan from the early days after Italy's surrender up until the very end of the war. After 1945 she had also been an activist in the communist-oriented women's association (UDI). De Simone, who was apparently already in Rijeka when the request was submitted, pleaded to be given employment since she was "very much in need and deprived of everything" after her "house in Italy was burned down, and everything was destroyed by the fascists." As with other immigrants from

⁶³ DARI, 86, k. 626.

⁶⁴ Enrico Miletto, *Gli italiani di Tito: La Zona B del Territorio Libero di Trieste e l'emigrazione comunista in Jugoslavia (1947-1954)* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2019), 193, 211-13; Marco Abram, "Internationalism and Cominformist Dissidence in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Case of the Italian Immigrant Workers in Rijeka," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, forthcoming; Luke Gramith, "Liberation by Emigration: Italian Communists, the Cold War, and West-East Migration from Venezia Giulia, 1945-1949" (PhD diss., Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, 2019).

⁶⁵ There are references to two different locations for such a camp: Vrpolje pri Vipavi and Jesenice. See Giacomo Scotti, *Per caso e per passione* (Trieste: Lint, 2013), 44. See DARI, 86, k. 630, Narodni odbor grada Rijeke, Savjet za narodno zdravlje i soc. politiku, Uprava za iseljenike, August 23, 1952.

⁶⁶ Abram, "Internationalism and Cominformist Dissidence"; Gramith, "Liberation by Emigration", 244-54.

Italy, her motivation appeared to come from a combination of ideological and economic reasons that were deeply interwoven with the hostile atmosphere toward former partisans in early Cold War Italy.⁶⁷

The Italian migrants' political elite in Rijeka was caught in the middle after the split between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. It sided predominantly with the latter, which resulted in marginalization and even arrests. Some of them left, and during the ensuing period, many of its members also departed. However, a few of them remained in Yugoslavia, including some figures who contributed to the development of local Italian institutions. Their story shows how politics had contradictory effects on ideologically driven migrants. It provided such migrants with a privileged position but also made them more vulnerable during significant political shifts. It also highlighted the complex entanglement of motivations behind decisions to stay or leave, ranging from political pressure to economic considerations, including the possibility of sending remittances home.⁶⁸

A springboard to the Western Bloc

Out of the complex constellation of migration flows moving both into and out of Rijeka, a new pattern started to emerge in the early 1950s. The local Party authorities noticed that, in addition to locals, many defectors from Rijeka—as well as from other cities in the immediate area, such as Pula and Labin, which had witnessed significant postwar migration—were recent arrivals. Consequently, the authorities lamented not having paid more attention on “the kind of people arriving in the city and their intentions.”⁶⁹

As time went by, it became clear that, for many, Rijeka had become a transit stop on the way to western destinations from which they escaped to Italy and then drew on support from the relief agencies in charge of resettling refugees. In the second half of the 1950s, sixty-five percent of escapees from Rijeka were newcomers, while the proportion of those of “Italian origin” decreased. During 1956, a total of 250 refugees “of Italian origin” and 497 newcomers escaped to Italy, but in the first six months of 1957 they numbered 96 and 455 respectively. At the time, this was already known, as it was clear to the authorities that there were “groups of individuals claiming they had chosen this city for employment reasons but were actually planning an escape to Italy.”⁷⁰ Many of them spent a few months employed in local factories and would then attempt to flee as soon as the right contacts had been established.

Disappointment with both the economic and political situations might have explained an abrupt decision to leave, but in several cases both Yugoslav and Italian authorities presumed that the escapees had resettled in Rijeka on purpose, using the city as a springboard for leaving

⁶⁷ DARI, 323, k. 118, Letter by Antonietta De Simone, November 11, 1947.

⁶⁸ Abram, “Internationalism and Cominformist Dissidence.”

⁶⁹ *Zapisi Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske, 1952.–1954.*, Prilog zapisniku sjednice Izvršnog komiteta CK SK Hrvatske, održane 3.XII.1954. godine u Zagrebu, 171-82; DARI, 223, k. 25, 8, Zapisnik sa V Partijske konferencije I rajonskog komiteta KPH Rijeka, April 13, 1951.

⁷⁰ APCM, UZC, sez. II, FVG Trieste, b. 58 vol. II, 8684, September 28, 1956.

the country.⁷¹ Such an outflow of people had harsh local repercussions, and their contemporaries clearly saw this impact directly. One piece of evidence for this was the unverifiable rumor that 5 percent of all workers in Rijeka, namely the youngest ones, had escaped to Italy within the space of a year and a half. Over three years, from 1955 to 1957, 775 locals and 1,384 newcomers defected from Rijeka.⁷² The escapees apparently enjoyed widespread support, since the locals were not eager to collaborate with the police and report them. Nevertheless, the city was said to be crowded with informers trying to collect information on those who had come solely to establish contact with a smuggler.⁷³ In the 1960s the number of escapees decreased, but the percentage of newcomers among those who left increased. In 1961 the percentage of newcomers among the escapees from Rijeka reached 81 percent.⁷⁴

Unsurprisingly, unskilled workers were dissatisfied with their circumstances, and they were ready to take any opportunity to leave. However, from the early 1960s onwards, as in other parts of Yugoslavia, when the state began cautiously opening its borders for external emigration, even skilled workers from the more “developed centers” such as Rijeka submitted requests to work abroad. If the requests were rejected, as most were in 1962, they then left illegally. Newcomers to Rijeka were once again still at the top of the list of those who wanted to leave. According to an article in *Novi List*, in the first ten months of 1962, a total of 616 blue- and white-collar workers from in and around Rijeka traveled abroad legally to work, of whom 364 went to West Germany. However, most of them were newcomers from Dalmatia or the nearby Čabar municipality, which both had a long tradition of migration.⁷⁵ Even though migration patterns were directed by the Cold War context, continuities still mattered.

Conclusions

Newly drawn borders combined with the establishment of the communist regime prompted dramatic changes in Rijeka, which completely transformed its demographics and placed it in a strategic position within Yugoslavia. I argue here that by looking simultaneously at the influx and outflow of people in and out of Rijeka, connections and nonlinear patterns emerge among phenomena that have, to date, been analyzed separately. Rijeka’s history has indeed been dominated by dramatic ruptures throughout the twentieth century; however, continuities in migration practices and

⁷¹ DARI, 209, k. 29, Sastanak, June 17, 1947.

⁷² APCM, UZC, sez. II, FVG Trieste, b. 56 vol. III, *Afflusso di clandestini dalla Jugoslavia – Anni 1955-1956-1957*.

⁷³ Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Ministero dell’Interno (MI), Gabinetto, 1957-1960, b. 425, *Afflusso di clandestini dalla Jugoslavia – Elaborati statistici per il triennio 1955-1956-1957*, March 26, 1958.

⁷⁴ ACS, MI, Gabinetto, 1961-1963, b. 391, *Afflusso di clandestini dalla Jugoslavia – Elaborati statistici per l’anno 1960*, April 17, 1961.

⁷⁵ HDA, 1220, 2.3.17, f. 126, *Odlazak naših građana na rad u inozemstvo*, 2; DARI, Skupština kotara Rijeka (320), k. 29, Sekretarijat za unutrašnje poslove, September 30, 1963; “Zapošljavanje žena – problem kojim će se morati više baviti općinski društveni planovi,” *Novi List*, December 4, 1962, 2.

trajectories should not be overlooked. Apart from revolutionary—and, for some, traumatic—fractures, such as a shift in sovereignty and a new sociopolitical order, other factors lay at the root of emigration out of Rijeka, including connections between the port and the external world, and the existence of diasporic networks that could support and entice those willing to start a new life somewhere else. The same holds true for immigration flows into the city, which fostered and reshaped old routes in addition to those emerging within the new framework.

The political and economic transition in Rijeka provoked a challenging process of adjustment to new circumstances. This involved mobility in and out of the city, intertwinement of different flows, and stratification of different migration experiences within the same homes, workplaces, and social spaces. The mass emigration of inhabitants during the first two postwar decades was quickly reversed by the influx of people from other Yugoslav areas. From the early 1950s on, the city continued to attract newcomers not only because of its booming industrial economy, but also because it was considered to have one of the highest standards of living in Yugoslavia, even though such standards dramatically increased across the whole country.⁷⁶ In addition, it succeeded in exploiting its geographical position in the country's northwestern corner as a means to increase port traffic and act as a bridge between Istria and inland Croatia. In fact, as noted by the local cadres, Istria's integration into the new Yugoslav framework remained in dispute at least until the mid-1960s;⁷⁷ however this swiftly improved over the coming decades.

124

The radically different horizons of emigrants' and immigrants' expectations may explain why there are conflicting images of postwar Rijeka: It was either a half-abandoned backwater or a thriving urban center, a deeply traumatized city or a young town focused on the future. As I have attempted to demonstrate, the outflow and influx of populations were intertwined. Both movements unfolded gradually over the years, and both influenced the other. While to some extent this is the story of many Eastern European borderlands, there are at least two elements that make the Rijeka case specific. Because of the different circumstances in which the regime change happened and the Yugoslav authorities' differing view of the Italian population, the departure of locals became a long, drawn-out, nonlinear process. In addition, Rijeka's peculiar geographical position and its well-equipped port turned the city into a transit point along longer migratory trajectories stretching from the Yugoslav interior to places overseas. Migration to the city originated within a new and original urban environment where questions of loyalty and belonging were renegotiated. While the city was literally and symbolically built by migrants, it was also shaped by the absence of those who left gradually over the years for a variety of reasons.

⁷⁶ In 1983 the GDP per capita was 5,500 dollars, which was significantly higher than the average GDP in the Socialist Republic of Croatia (3,500). Strenja, *Rijeka i regija*, 23.

⁷⁷ HDA, 1220, D-Dokumentacija, 670 Aktuelni problemi prosvjete, kulturnog života i propagandne aktivnosti u Istri (1963), 5-6.

SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Državni arhiv u Rijeci

1. Narodni odbor grada Rijeke 1947-1952 (86), k. 43, Izvještaj za mjesec kolovoz 1948. O radu službe inspekcije rada.
2. Narodni odbor grada Rijeke 1947-1952 (86), k. 626.
3. Narodni odbor grada Rijeke 1947-1952 (86), k. 630, Molba za dodjelu stana, Milan Smolčić, January 9, 1952.
4. Narodni odbor grada Rijeke 1947-1952 (86), k. 630, Narodni odbor grada Rijeke, Savjet za narodno zdravlje i soc. politiku, Uprava za iseljenike, August 23, 1952.
5. Gradski komitet Saveza komunista Hrvatske (209), k. 28, Organizaciono-politički izvještaj GK KPH Rijeka, June 30, 1949.
6. Gradski komitet Saveza komunista Hrvatske (209), k. 29, Sastanak, June 17, 1947.
7. Općinski komitet Saveza komunista Hrvatske Stari grad (221), k. 13, Zapisnik sa sastanka Općinskog komiteta, November 27, 1956.
8. Općinski komitet Saveza komunista Hrvatske Sušak (222), k. 9, Izvještaj o političkoj situaciji na općini Sušak.
9. Općinski komitet SKH Zamet (223), k. 25, 8, Zapisnik sa V Partijske konferencije I rajonskog komiteta KPH Rijeka, April 13, 1951.
10. Općinski komitet SKH Zamet (223), k. 26, 2, Zapisnici OO SK 1949, Politički izvještaj Torpedo 1949.
11. Kotarski odbor SSRNH (229), Stanovništvo i zaposlenost na području kotara Rijeka 1964.
12. Skupština kotara Rijeka (320), k. 29, Sekretarijat za unutrašnje poslove, September 30, 1963.
13. Gradski narodni odbor Rijeka (323), k. 117.
14. Gradski narodni odbor Rijeka (323), k. 117, Izvještaj rada od 3.5.1945 do 20.11.1946 GN Rijeka Odjel trgovine i opskrbe.
15. Gradski narodni odbor Rijeka (323), k. 118, Letter by Antonietta De Simone, November 11, 1947.
16. Edo Jardas (389), k. 4, Darko Stuparić, "Edo Jardas: Partija me nije kovala da ljubim ruke."

125

Hrvatski državni arhiv

1. HDA, Savez komunista Hrvatske. Centralni komitet (1220), D-Dokumentacija, Katalog I, Organizaciono-politički Sekretarijat (2.3.1.7), f. 126, Problem bijega u inostranstvo.
2. HDA, Savez komunista Hrvatske. Centralni komitet (1220), D-Dokumentacija, Katalog I, Organizaciono-politički sekretarijat (2.3.1.7), f. 126, Odlazak naših građana na rad u inozemstvo.
3. HDA, Savez komunista Hrvatske. Centralni komitet (1220), 670 Aktuelni problemi prosvjete, kulturnog života i propagandne aktivnosti u Istri (1963).
4. Republički sekretarijat za pravosudne poslove SRH (1984), k. 75, Godišnji izvještaj o radu javnog tužilaštva u 1957., February 21, 1958.

Arhiv Jugoslavije

1. Ministarstvo rada FNRJ (25), b. 111, Narodna Republika Hrvatska, Ministarstvo rada, Odjel za iseljenike, Ministarstvu rada FNR Jugoslavije, Sekretarijatu, August 9, 1948.
2. Ministarstvo rada FNRJ (25), b. 111, Ministarstvo rada FNRJ, Odeljenje za iseljenike, Ministarstvu rada NR Hrvatske, Iseljeničkom odjelu, May 23, 1948.
3. Ministarstvo rada FNRJ (25), b. 127, Zaduženje za mjesec juni za oblast Dalmacije.
4. Ministarstvo rada FNRJ (25), b. 127, Nedostatak radne snage na Rijeci, August 2, 1948.
5. Ministarstvo rada FNRJ (25), b. 152, Vlada Federativne Narodne Republike Jugoslavije, Pretsedništvo, Ministarstvu rada FNRJ, October 19, 1948.
6. Ministarstvo rada FNRJ (25), b. 153, Radna snaga za Luka [*sic*] Rijeku, September 27, 1949.

Archivio della Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri

1. Ufficio Zone di Confine, sez. II, FVG Trieste, b. 56 vol. III, Afflusso di clandestini dalla Jugoslavia – Anni 1955-1956-1957.
2. Ufficio Zone di Confine, sez. II, FVG Trieste, b. 58 vol. II, f. 6/6.
3. Ufficio Zone di Confine, sez. II, FVG Trieste, b. 58 vol. II, 8684, September 28, 1956.

126

Archivio Centrale dello Stato

1. Ministero dell'Interno, Gabinetto, 1957-1960, b. 425, Afflusso di clandestini dalla Jugoslavia – Elaborati statistici per il triennio 1955-1956-1957, March 26, 1958.
2. Ministero dell'Interno, Gabinetto, 1961-1963, b. 391, Afflusso di clandestini dalla Jugoslavia – Elaborati statistici per l'anno 1960, April 17, 1961.

PRESS ARTICLES

1. "Italija vraća one, koji ilegalno prelaze granicu." *Novi List*, August 24, 1957, 1.
2. "Sloboda gladovanja." *Riječki List*, February 29, 1952, 3.
3. "Sve više molbi optanata za jugoslavensko državljanstvo," *Riječki List*, January 23, 1952, 2.
4. "Tek svaki treći rođen u Rijeci." *Novi List*, March 10, 1964, 4.
5. "Zapošljavanje žena – problem kojim će se morati više baviti općinski društveni planovi." *Novi List*, December 4, 1962, 2.
6. "Zapuštenost maloljetnika, alkoholizam i prostitucija," *Novi List*, June 7, 1957, 2.
7. Bodilo, Frane. "Bijeg preko granice." *Novi List*, January 6, 1961, 3.

PUBLISHED SOURCES

1. *Popis stanovništva 1953. Knjiga 11.* Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1960.
2. *Popis stanovništva 1961. Rezultati za opštine. Knjiga 6.* Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1967.
3. *Popis stanovništva i stanova 1971. Stanovništvo. Knjiga 6.* Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1974.
4. Vojnović, Branislava, ed. *Zapisnici Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske, 1949. – 1952.* Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2008, Zapisnik nastavka sjednice biroa CK KP Hrvatske održane 8. rujna 1952. g. u Zagrebu.
5. Vojnović, Branislava, ed. *Zapisnici Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske, 1952. – 1954.* Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2008, Zapisnik sjednice Izvršnog komiteta CK SKH Hrvatske, održane 3.XII.1954. godine u Zagrebu.
6. Vojnović, Branislava, ed. *Zapisnici Politbiroa Centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Hrvatske, 1952. – 1954.* Zagreb: Hrvatski državni arhiv, 2008, Prilog zapisniku sjednice Izvršnog komiteta CK SK Hrvatske, održane 3.XII.1954. godine u Zagrebu

ORAL HISTORY SOURCES

1. Interviews conducted with Slobodan Petrović (June 2020) and Miodrag Milošević (July 2020) (in collaboration with the Rijeka branch of the association Prosvjeta).
2. Interview with Pavle Bogović (September 2020).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Abram, Marco. "Internationalism and Cominformist Dissidence in Socialist Yugoslavia: The Case of the Italian Immigrant Workers in Rijeka." *Journal of Cold War Studies*, forthcoming.
2. Abram, Marco. "Nazionalità, lingua e territorio nel socialismo jugoslavo: il bilinguismo a Fiume (1947-1955)." *Qualestoria* 46, no. 1, (2018): 93-113.
3. Amar, Tarik Cyril. *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists.* Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2016.
4. Ballinger, Pamela. "'National Refugees,' Displaced Persons, and the Reconstruction of Italy: The Case of Trieste." In *The Disentanglement of Populations. Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe, 1944-49*, edited by Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White. Basingstone: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011: 115-40.
5. Ballinger, Pamela. *The World Refugees Made: Decolonization and the Foundation of Postwar Italy.* Ithaca – London: Cornell University Press, 2020.
6. Borodziej, Włodzimierz, and von Puttkamer, Joachim. *Immigrants and Foreigners in Central and Eastern Europe during the Twentieth Century.* Abingdon, OX – New York, NY: Routledge, 2020.

7. Brunnbauer, Ulf. *Globalizing Southeastern Europe: Emigrants, America, and the State Since the Late Nineteenth Century*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016.
8. Carruthers, Susan L. *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape, and Brainwashing*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009.
9. Columi, Cristina, Liliana Ferrari, Gianna Nassisi, and Germano Trani. *Storia di un esodo: Istria 1945-1956*. Trieste: Istituto regionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 1980.
10. Dubrović, Ervin. *Merika: Iseljavanje iz srednje Europe u Ameriku 1880.-1914. / Emigration from Central Europe to America 1880-1914*. Rijeka: Muzej grada Rijeke, 2008.
11. Dukovski, Darko. "Dva egzodusa: hrvatski (1919.-1941.) i talijanski (1943.-1955.)." *Adrias: zbornik radova Zavoda za znanstveni i umjetnički rad Hrvatske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti u Splitu*, 15 (2008): 129-65.
12. Fabio, Nedjeljko. *Vježbanje života – Smrt Vronskog*. Zagreb: Mozaik, 2013.
13. Gaćeša, Nikola L. *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Bačkoj: 1918.-1941*. Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, Odeljenje za društvene nauke, 1968.
14. Gatrell, Peter. *The Unsettling of Europe. The Great Migration, 1945 to Present*. London: Allen Lane, 2019.
15. Giuricin, Ezio, and Giuricin, Luciano. *La comunità nazionale italiana. Vol. 1 Storia e istituzioni degli italiani dell'Istria, Fiume e Dalmazia (1944-2006)*. Rovigno: Centro di ricerche storiche, 2008.
16. Gramith, Luke. "Liberation by Emigration: Italian Communists, the Cold War, and West-East Migration from Venezia Giulia, 1945-1949." PhD diss., Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, 2019.
17. Green, Nancy L. and Francois Weil. *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation*. Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007.
18. Hrobat Virloget, Katja. "Breme preteklosti: spomini na sobivanje in migracije v slovenski Istri po drugi svetovni vojni." *Acta Histriae*, 23, no. 3 (2015): 531-54.
19. Kalc, Aleksej. "The Other Side of the 'Istrian Exodus': Immigration and Social Restoration in Slovenian Coastal Towns in the 1950s." *Dve Domovini*, 49 (2019): 145-62.
20. Karakaš Obradov, Marica. *Novi mozaici nacija u "novim porecima": migracije stanovništva na hrvatskom području tijekom Drugoga svjetskog rata i poraća*. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2014.
21. Klinger, William. "La Cunard nel Quarnero: la linea Fiume - New York (1904-1914)." *Quaderni del Centro di Ricerche Storiche di Rovigno* 22 (2011): 7-45.
22. Le Normand, Brigitte. "Rijeka as a Socialist Port: Insights from Jugolinija's Early Years, 1947-1960." *International Journal of Maritime History*, 33, no. 1 (2021): 193-208.
23. Madieri, Marisa. *Verde acqua*. Torino: Einaudi, 1987.
24. Maticka, Marijan. *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1948*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga: Stvarnost, 1990.
25. Mileta Mattiuz, Olinto. *Popolazioni dell'Istria, Fiume, Zara e Dalmazia, 1850-2002: ipotesi di quantificazione demografica*. Trieste, A.D.E.S., 2005.

26. Miletto, Enrico. *Gli italiani di Tito: La Zona B del Territorio Libero di Trieste e l'emigrazione comunista in Jugoslavia (1947-1954)*. Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2019.
27. Morovich, Enrico. *Un italiano di Fiume*. Milano: Rusconi, 1993.
28. Moscarda, Orietta. "La 'giustizia del popolo': sequestri e confische a Fiume nel secondo dopoguerra (1946-1948)." *Qualestoria* 25, no.1 (1997): 209-23.
29. Pupo, Raoul. *Fiume città di passione*. Bari: Laterza, 2018.
30. Radvanovsky, Zdenek. "The Social and Economic Consequences of Resettling Czechs into Northwestern Bohemia, 1945-1947." In *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*, edited by Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, 241-60. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
31. Roknić Bežanić, Andrea. "Uspostava i organizacija civilnih i vojnih vlasti u poslijeratnoj Rijeci." *Časopis za povijest Zapadne Hrvatske*, no. 6-7 (2012): 163-77.
32. Rolandi, Francesca. "Rotte di transito. Profughi jugoslavi nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra." *Memoria e ricerca*, no. 2 (2019): 349-70.
33. Šarić, Tatjana. "Bijeg iz socijalističke Jugoslavije – ilegalna emigracija iz Hrvatske od 1945. do početka šezdesetih godina 20. stoljeća." *Migracijske i etničke teme* 21, no. 2 (2015): 195-220.
34. Scotti, Giacomo. *Per caso e per passione*. Trieste: Lint, 2013.
35. Sobelevski, Mihael. *D'Annunzijeva vladavina u Rijeci (rujan 1919.-siječanj 1921.) – prvi egzodus Hrvata*. In *Talijanska uprava na hrvatskom prostoru i egzodus Hrvata (1918.-1943.): zbornik radova s Međunarodnog znanstvenog skupa, Zagreb 22.-23. listopada 1997*, edited by Marino Manin, 287-99. Zagreb: Hrvatski Institut za povijest : Društvo Egzodus istarskih Hrvata, 2001.
36. Stelli, Giovanni. *La memoria che vive. Fiume, interviste e testimonianze*. Roma: Società di studi fiumani – Archivio museo storico di Fiume, 2008.
37. Strenja et al., eds. *Rijeka i regija u Titovo doba*. Rijeka: Društvo "Josip Broz Tito," 2012.
38. Ther, Philipp and Ana Siljak. *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001.
39. Thum, Gregor. *Uprooted: How Breslau Became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011.
40. Woodward, Susan L. *Socialist Unemployment. The Political Economy of Yugoslavia*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995.