



"G.S.Rakovski" National Defense Academy  
Defense Advanced Research Institute

# NATIONS AT WAR

WHY DO NATIONS  
PARTICIPATE IN WARS,  
AND WHY NOT?

Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
of the Partnership for Peace Consortium CSWG

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***Nations at War: Why do Nations  
Participate in Wars, and Why Not?***



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# **NATIONS AT WAR: WHY DO NATIONS PARTICIPATE IN WARS, AND WHY NOT?**

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# Everyday Life during the Crisis: The Yugoslav Military Government in the Julian Region, 1945-1954

by

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## **Abstract**

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*In the following article, the author provides a comprehensive overview of the population in Zone B – the territory of Julian Region under Yugoslav Military Government. The analysis includes: the attitude of the military government towards population, social, national and religious structure of the population, population movement, health care, political, civil and religious liberties. The article includes the findings based on documents from the Military Archive in Belgrade, Diplomatic Archive in Belgrade, Archive of Yugoslavia and corresponding bibliography in Serbian, Slovenian, English and Italian language.*

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The entry of Yugoslav Army troops into Trieste, Monfalcone, and Gorizia on 1 May 1945 reawakened an old territorial dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, Anglo-American military units entered these cities.<sup>2</sup> Diplomatic consequences of military operations in the Julian Region seriously jeopardized relations between Yugoslav government on the one side and American and British governments on the other. This crisis included finding solutions for geopolitical and

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1 The state border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the area of the Julian Region was formed after the First World War pursuant to the Rapalo Treaty of 1920 and the Rome Treaty of 1924. This territorial division did not suit Yugoslav administrations and they tried to integrate these regions in the Yugoslav state. During the Second World War, territorial pretensions toward this region were seen in the Yugoslav royal government-in-exile as well as in the administration formed by the Yugoslav Communists.

2 Geoffrey Cox, *La corsa per Trieste* (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2005).

strategic issues. Differences among the American, British, and Soviet governments were becoming more and more obvious in relation to the territorial status of the Julian Region. From May to June 1945, the American and British governments faced communication problems with the Soviet government. Established arrangements about spheres of interests were brought into question and survival of the war coalition was seriously jeopardized. The Trieste crisis was temporarily pacified by signing Belgrade Agreement on 9 June 1945 between Yugoslavia on the one side and the United States and the United Kingdom on the other. The Duino Agreement, which was signed on 20 June 1945, contained military issues from the Belgrade Agreement. Under pressure from the American and British governments, the Yugoslav government was forced to accept an unfavorable demarcation line. The Julian Region became occupied territory divided between the Anglo-American (Zone A) and Yugoslav Military Governments (Zone B). The Yugoslav Government expressed in their statements their dissatisfaction and hope that these negotiations did not solve the final status of the Julian borderland. After signing the Peace Treaty with Italy in Paris on 10 February 1947, the Free Territory of Trieste was established.<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to the Standing Statute of the Free Territory of Trieste, which is an integral part of the Peace Treaty, this territory was put under the authority of the international governor and supervision of the UN Security Council. Due to the impossibility of reaching an agreement between Yugoslavia and Italy on the selection of the governor, the Governor of the Free Territory of Trieste was not elected.<sup>4</sup> The division between Zone A and Zone B existed until 5 October 1954 when, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding made between Yugoslavia and Italy, Zone A was acceded to Italy and Zone B to Yugoslavia -- and then the Trieste crisis was settled. According to the Order of the Yugoslav Armed Forces Supreme Commander, Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslav Military Government of the Free Territory of Trieste was abolished and stopped its operations on 26 October 1954.<sup>5</sup>

## **Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste**

On the basis of the agreements signed in Belgrade and Duino, the Supreme Commander of the Yugoslav Army, Tito, directed on 23 June 1945 the establishment of the Yugoslav Military Government in the Julian Region. After 15 September 1947, when the Paris Peace Treaty came into effect, the border was established between the

3 Annexes VI, VII, VIII and IX to the Peace Treaty in Paris define the status of the Free Territory of Trieste: "Decree on Ratification of the Peace Treaty with Italy," Official Gazette of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia (29 August 1947), 1047-1068.

4 "Official communication of the UN Security Council regarding appointment of the governor of the Free Territory of Trieste, New York, December 18, 1947," Documents about Foreign Policy of Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, 1947 (Beograd: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1986), 2: 530.

5 Miljan Milkić, "Das Freie Territorium Triest unter jugoslawischer Militärregierung 1947 bis 1954," in *Die Alpen im Kalten Krieg: Historischer Raum, Strategie, und Sicherheitspolitik*, ed. Dieter Krüger and Felix Schneider, 336 (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012).



Federal People Republic of Yugoslavia and the Free Territory of Trieste. Pursuant to the order of the commander of the detachment of 16 September 1947, the Yugoslav Military Government was restructured according to the emerging circumstances with respect to the civil authorities which operated on the ground.<sup>6</sup>

The Yugoslav Military Government exercised control of the civil authority work and solved issues important for the population in the Yugoslav zone of the Free Territory of Trieste. General control was carried out by the chief of the Yugoslav Military Government through his assistants who were appointed the heads of departments. The majority of the desk officers, heads, and clerks were civilians from the territory of the Zone B. The immediate control of the border with Yugoslavia and demarcation line with the Anglo-American zone was carried out by the National Militia. The Military Administration Command included the Military Administration Commander, Political Advisor who was the Yugoslav government's representative, Assistant Commander, head of the administrative department, and advisors. The Military Administration had a Legal Section, Financial Section, Economic Protection Section, Information Office, and Military Prosecutor's Office.<sup>7</sup> The Political Advisor to the Commander of the Yugoslav Military Government was in the personnel records at Yugoslav Government. Other advisors were appointed by governments of the Socialist Republic of Croatia and the Socialist Republic of Slovenia. As of 21 July 1950, there were 107 military and civil personnel employed in the Yugoslav Military Government.<sup>8</sup> The Yugoslav Military Government represented the armed forces through which the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia exercised its international mandate in the grounds of the Zone B. The Yugoslav Military Government relied completely on the state authorities of Yugoslavia, especially the Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Finances. The budget of the Yugoslav Military Administration was provided mainly by loans from the Yugoslav Ministry of Finances and by donations from the Yugoslav Government.

The section of the Julian Region which was controlled by the Yugoslav Military Government was divided into two counties, Koper and Buje, with towns and villages. Civil authority in Zone B was exercised by the Istrian County People's Committee through its departments. People's committees were established by Yugoslav partisans during the Second World War. Elected representatives of the people were included in county national assemblies in Koper and Buje, while those two assemblies represented the District National Assembly, which was the highest body of civil authority in Zone B. Judicial authority was represented by a high court, district court, and three county courts in Koper, Buje, and Piran. Apart from civil courts, there were Yugoslav Military Government courts – the Military Court and High Military Court of the

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6 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/1.

7 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 10, No. 2/1. "Resolution on the organization of the Military Administration of Yugoslav People's Army on January 12, 1953."

8 Milkić, "Das Freie Territorium Triest unter jugoslawischer Militärregierung 1947 bis 1954," 329.

Yugoslav Military Government.<sup>9</sup>

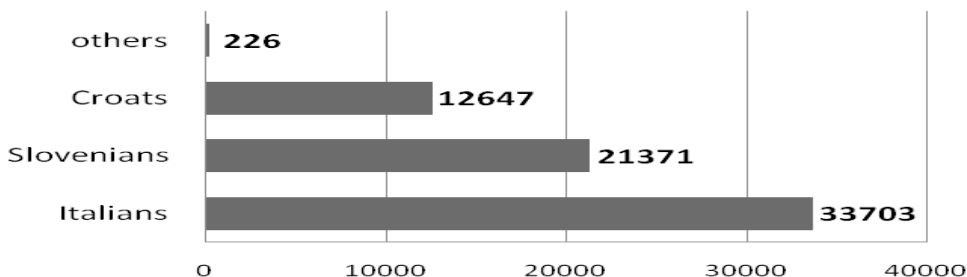
The area of the Free Territory of Trieste amounted to 738 km<sup>2</sup>, with 222 km<sup>2</sup> in Zone A and 516 km<sup>2</sup> in Zone B. In late 1947, there were around 282,000 people in Zone A, while 240,000 of them lived in Trieste City. The number of inhabitants in Zone B was being reduced constantly due to population migration. According to the official data of the Yugoslav Military Government, 10,125 people legally migrated to Trieste from June 1945 to September 1953. Around 85 percent of them were Italians (8,511 from county Koper and 1,614 from county Buje). Apart from legal migration based on the approval of Yugoslav military authorities, there were many examples of illegal transfers from Zone B to Zone A.<sup>10</sup>

	<b>Zone A</b>
	<b>Zone B</b>

*Number of Citizens<sup>11</sup>*

The Peace Treaty with Italy guaranteed equality of all nationalities within the Free Territory of Trieste and Italian and Slovenian languages were proclaimed as official. In some cases, Croatian was included as the third official language. On 14 November 1947, a Decision on Amendments and Supplements to the Decision on Prohibition of Arousal of National, Racial, and Religious Hatred and Division was adopted in Zone B.

### National Structure



### Zone B National Structure 1948<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 328.

<sup>10</sup> Raul Pupo, "Eksodus iz Cone B Svobodnega tržaškega ozemlja 1945-1958" [Exodus from Zone B of Free Territory of Trieste, 1945-1958], *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino Letnik LIII, Številka 1* (2013): 173-185.

<sup>11</sup> Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



## Political rights

The Yugoslav Military Government emphasized that there were political and civil liberties and brotherhood in Zone B between all the three nationalities living in this territory. In September 1949, in Zone B, seven political parties and 101 different associations were registered.<sup>13</sup> All permanent residents of the Zone were entitled to vote in the Yugoslav zone of the Free Territory of Trieste. During the elections for administration bodies in Zone B held on 16 April 1950, three parties participated: the Slovenian-Italian National Front, which was in favor of the accession of Zone B to Yugoslavia (they won 183 seats), the pro-Italian Christian-Socialist Party (1 seat), and the Socialist Party which advocated the union between the Zone A and Zone B (two seats).<sup>14</sup> The second local elections in Zone B were held on 7 December 1952, on the same day when the elections were held in the People's Republic of Slovenia and based on the same election law.<sup>15</sup> Ninety-seven percent of the population voted. Opposition parties did not participate.

## Religious Rights

Within the church organization, Zone B was a part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Trieste, headed by Bishop Antonio Santin. In Zone B, in September 1949, eight Roman Catholic religious organizations and seven sections were registered. Religious rights of the population were respected to the extent religious freedom did not jeopardize security from the standpoint of the Yugoslav military authorities. Military authorities often kept their eye on Roman Catholic priests and even on Bishop Santin. In early June 1952, eleven Roman Catholic priests from Zone B were interrogated in the premises of the Yugoslav Military Government.<sup>16</sup> The only charge against them was for participating in the conference held on 28 April 1952 organized by the Trieste Bishop Santin. In early July 1952, when the bishop started assigning young priests within Zone B, the commander of the Yugoslav Military Government decided not to issue permanent residence permits in Zone B for these priests.<sup>17</sup> He did it in agreement with the assistant minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia. Religious rights of the Zone B residents were a matter of consideration in the diplomatic communications between Yugoslav and Italian representatives. Therefore, on 19 February 1949, the Italian mission in Belgrade sent a note on the requisition and departure of the priests from the monastery of Saint Ana in Koper to the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressing the importance of the monastery

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13 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

14 Ibid.

15 Nevenka Troha, „Volitve v Okraju Koper cone B Svobodnega tržaškega ozemlja,“ *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 3 (2002): 61-74.

16 Diplomatic Archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia, Political Archive, 1952, box 85, No. 47729 (cited hereafter as: DA, MFA, RS, PA).

17 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, box 85, No. 49554.

as a religious center and its importance in artistic and cultural terms.<sup>18</sup> Returning the priests to the monastery was demanded. What happened there in fact? Pursuant to the Law on Apartments, the Residential Office in Koper adopted a decision to move the brotherhood of the monastery to another location. The monastery was planned to be ceded to several institutions of public interest. Yugoslav military authorities rejected an appeal where religious reasons were given against moving the monastery to another location. A similar case was seen on 3 August 1954 when the Koper County People's Committee decided to transform the Saint Francis monastery in Piran into a home for senior citizens.<sup>19</sup> The Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted and demanded cancellation of that decision. With reference to solving the Trieste crisis, the Yugoslav Military Government warned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 July 1954 about the need to define the competence of the Diocese of Trieste within Koper and Buje in the future.<sup>20</sup>

## **Health Care**

The Health and Social Care Department of the Istra County People's Committee was in charge of health care in Zone B.<sup>21</sup> There was one social care office in both Koper and Buje. Health officers worked in villages within town civic committees. In towns, there was a town doctor controlling a health and hygiene office. In 1948, there were hospitals in Koper, Izola, and Piran, as well as one home for senior citizens and an anti-tuberculosis dispensary in Buje. The Institute for Social Insurance began adapting the Institute for Tuberculosis in 1949. In the period from 1947 to 1948, there were eighteen physicians, nine dentists, twenty-one midwives, ten pharmacists, and eight laboratory technicians in Zone B.<sup>22</sup> The number of medical workers did not change significantly in the following years. According to data from September 1950, total capacities in the hospitals in Zone B were as follows: 260 beds for internal medicine, 65 of them for surgery, 38 of them for childbirth, 100 of them for lung tuberculosis, 16 village clinics, and 3 factory clinics.<sup>23</sup> The cities with the best developed health care were Koper (with a pediatric advisory center and anti-tuberculosis dispensary, while a central medical and diagnostic laboratory was established in 1950); Izola (with a pediatric advisory center and anti-tuberculosis dispensary); Piran (pediatric advisory center); Buje (pediatric advisory center and anti-tuberculosis dispensary); Umag (pediatric advisory center); and Novigrad (pediatric advisory center). Special attention was paid to child health care. First aid centers were also established and served as independent institutions with three ambulance cars. A certain number of more serious patients were sent to hospitals in Trieste and medical treatment for them was covered by health insurance. Treatment costs for patients in Zone B

18 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1949, box 105, Trieste, No. 42984.

19 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box 91, Trieste, No. 411974.

20 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box 92, No. 49695.

21 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18.

22 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18.

23 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

in Trieste hospitals in 1952 amounted to around 15 billion liras.<sup>24</sup> In comparison, monthly export data from Zone B to Zone A averaged 63 billion liras in the same period, while the monthly import from Zone A to Zone B averaged 52 billion liras.<sup>25</sup>

Social insurance was organized in Zone B. In 1949, the number of insurers was increased by 25 percent, while family pensions were introduced on 1 January 1949. According to data from 15 September 1949, different types of pensions were disbursed to 1,300 people. The report of the Yugoslav Military Government states that in the period from September 1948 to September 1949, there were no insurance disbursements for unemployment cases since, as it was indicated, there were no unemployed people in Zone B.<sup>26</sup> To the contrary, there was a lack of a work force. The provisions on financial assistance to families with several children entered into effect on 1 April 1950. Assistance was introduced for families with three children and more. In 1950, provisions for the protection of pregnant women and nursing mothers enabled the introduction of more rights for women during pregnancies.<sup>27</sup> During maternity leave, a woman was entitled to full salary disbursement. In Zone B, there was the Red Cross for the Julian Region, which was recognized by the Yugoslav Military Government as a legitimate successor of the Italian Red Cross.<sup>28</sup>

## Economy and Market

In addition to the difficulties which followed the separation of trade on the Free Territory of Trieste, in the period of one year of its existence, the Yugoslav Military Government achieved with the Anglo-American military administration trade of over 255 million yugo-liras. Of this amount, exports to the Anglo-American zone was 2.8 times higher than imports. Wine and brandy accounted for the highest percentage of the exports, followed by foodstuffs, fruits, and vegetables. The area under the authority of the Yugoslav Military Government imported mainly cars and motorbikes, then fruits, vegetables, and medications.<sup>29</sup>

In the Zone B market, most of the goods were of Yugoslav origin and those items were exempted from customs limits. Exchange of goods between this zone and Yugoslavia was carried out over a clearing account at the National Bank of Yugoslavia and the Istrian Bank in Koper. In July 1949, the Yugoslav dinar was introduced as the official currency and thereby, Zone B became fully dependent of Yugoslavia. On 1 August 1951, economic measures were introduced to revive the exchange of goods between Zone B and Yugoslavia and to reduce the administrative limitations for crossing the border.<sup>30</sup>

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24 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box. 91, Trieste, No. 41958.

25 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box. 91, Trieste, No. 41958.

26 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 3, No. 1/4.

27 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

28 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18.

29 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/85.

30 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 6, No. 3/1.

Customer supply in basic food products was irregular. The Yugoslav Military Government indicated problems in the trading network in their reports.<sup>31</sup> There was a wheat flour and sugar shortage prior to Easter 1953. In the context of population requirements, some 32,700 kilograms of meat were sold in Koper during the same period.<sup>32</sup>

The main characteristic of the economy in Zone B was its connection with and dependence on the Yugoslav economy.<sup>33</sup> In Zone B, as opposed to Zone A, the Marshall Plan was not accepted. The Yugoslav Military Government was fully relying on Yugoslavia in their economic policy and they tended to enable economic linking between this territory and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav approach to economic development was introduced in 1949 through a one-year economic plan in Zone B.<sup>34</sup> Yugoslavia assisted in the introduction of a planned economy. Agriculture was the most important economy branch. Out of the total number of people capable of work, which was 67,947 people in 1948, 41,828 of them worked in agriculture.<sup>35</sup> Fishing was another important economic branch. Fishing was important for the commercial development of Zone B since fish were supplied for local consumption and for a canned food factory. On 15 September 1947, when the Peace Treaty with Italy became effective, there were 121 fishing ships and 107 small fishing boats registered in Zone B.<sup>36</sup> The most developed industrial branch was the food industry, which had the highest number of employees. The construction material industry, chemical industry, wood industry, and mining were also developed. Industry lacked a work force, especially a qualified workforce.

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31 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, box 93, No. 45958.

32 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, box 93, No. 45898.

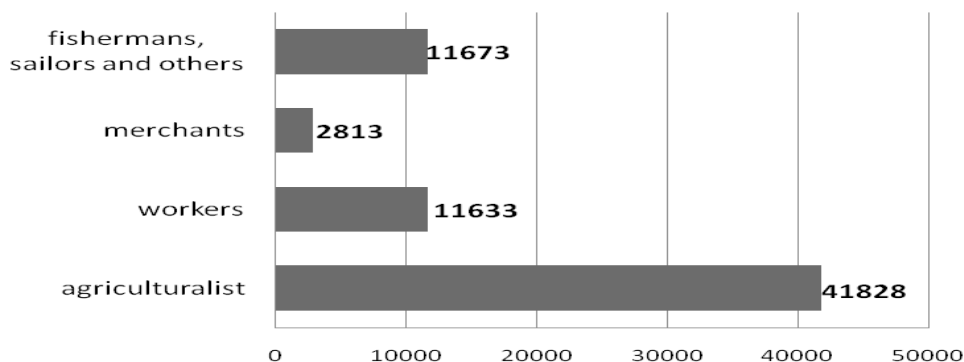
33 Darko Dukovski, „Politički atributi gospodarstva istarskoga porača,“ in *Vojna in mir na Primorskem: Od kapitulacije Italije leta 1943 do Londonskega memoranduma leta 1954*, ed. Jože Pirjevec, Gorazd Bajc, and Borut Klabjan, 183-199 (Koper: Založba Annales, 2005), and Jože Prinčič, „Primorsko gospodarstvo v času vojaških zasedbenih con (1945-1954),“ *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 1 (2008): 147-160.

34 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

35 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/1. Also see Prinčič, „Primorsko gospodarstvo v času vojaških zasedbenih con (1945-1954),“ 425-432.

36 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/44.

### Social Structure



#### *Zone B Social Structure 1948<sup>37</sup>*

### School System

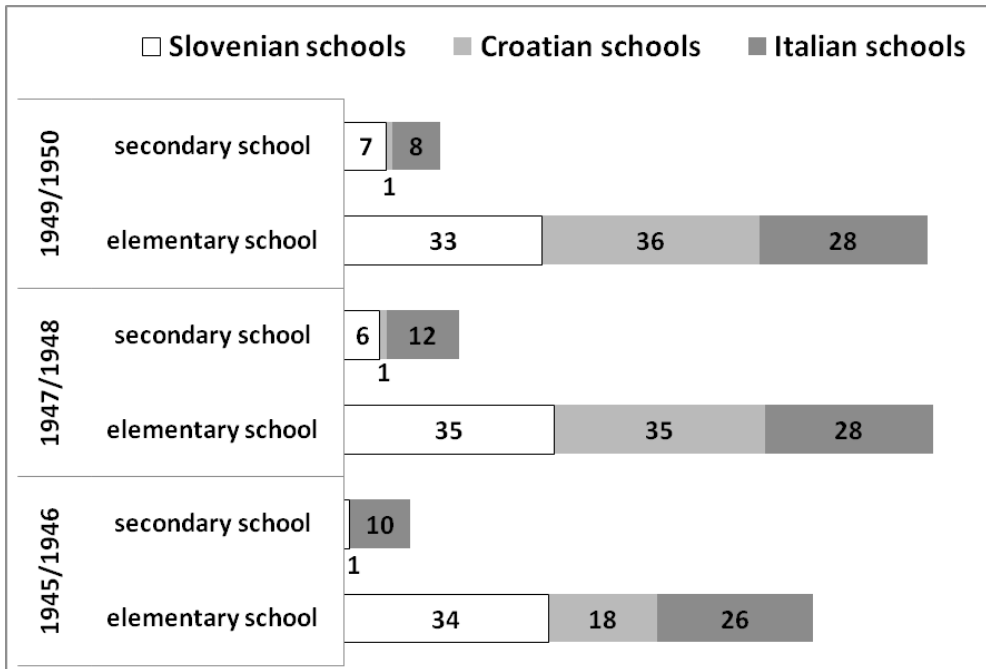
Equality between all the three nations was generally present in schools as well. There were schools for Italian, Slovenian, and Croatian-language speaking pupils.<sup>38</sup> However, political relations between Italy and Yugoslavia had a negative impact on the school system in Zone B. The two governments, Yugoslav and Italian, accused each other of endangering the rights to a “mother-tongue” school system. School system reforms and changes in the curricula in Zone B were the issues dealt with by Yugoslav and Italian diplomatic representatives.<sup>39</sup>

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37 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368.

38 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18. Nevenka Troha, „Oris položaja v koperskem okraju cone B Julijske krajine v letih 1945-1947,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 1-2 (1996): 67-93.

39 Archive of Yugoslavia, 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/71.



*Zone B School System*<sup>40</sup>

## Freedom of Movement

The decisions adopted by the military administration sometimes directly endangered basic human rights. Freedom of movement is one of these examples. The movement of people between Zone A and Zone B was huge and it amounted to between 10,000 and 15,000 people daily. Movement from one zone to another was more difficult due to the fact that one's identity had to be verified. Miloš Stamatović, the commander of the Yugoslav Military Government, agreed on 24 July 1951 in talks held in Bled (Yugoslavia) with the Vice President of Yugoslav Government, Edvard Kardelj, and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Vejvoda, to reinforce the security of the demarcation line towards the Anglo-American Zone.<sup>41</sup> An agreement with the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the State Secretariat of National Defense, approved on 10 July 1953, further strengthened the border regime between Zone A and Zone B.<sup>42</sup> A drastic threat to freedom of movement was seen when the Yugoslav Government asked the Yugoslav Military Government to prohibit the transfer via demarcation line between Zone A and Zone B, as their reaction to the political decision of 8 October 1953 when the United Kingdom and the U.S. announced their

40 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368.

41 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 6, No. 3/1.

42 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 11, No. 1/1.



decision to terminate the Allied Military Government of Zone A and to hand over that zone to the Italian Government.

In line with the determination of the Yugoslav Government to integrate the territory of Zone B, crossing the border between the Zone B and Yugoslavia was fully liberalized over time. The commander of the Yugoslav Military Government, Colonel Miloš Stamatović, sent on 24 April 1953 to the Yugoslav State Secretary of Foreign Affairs his proposal on the successive abolition of the border line between Zone B and Yugoslavia.<sup>43</sup> At that time, the state border was crossed by people using only personal documents, and goods and the money trade were not controlled because Zone B had been earlier integrated into the Yugoslav customs and monetary system. Colonel Stamatović recommended that border units be withdrawn from the state border to reduce them to the minimum, and later to be replaced with the national militia of the Social Republic of Croatia and the Social Republic of Slovenia. The order to transfer the border control responsibility between the border units of the Yugoslav People's Army and National Militia was issued by the State Secretary for the National Defence, General Ivan Gošnjak, on 10 July 1953.<sup>44</sup> Pursuant to the decision of the State Secretary for National Defence, General Ivan Gošnjak, the units which secured the demarcation line between the Zones A and B were subordinated on 25 October 1954 to the command of the 436th Border Brigade of the Yugoslav People's Army.<sup>45</sup>

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These are only some of the answers to the question what the everyday life of the population in Zone B was like. It is important to stress that the Yugoslav Military Government was not guided solely by the interests of the population in the decision-making process. The political situation which was the result of the unsettled international status of the Free Territory of Trieste effected the everyday life in the areas under the Yugoslav Military Government. Yugoslav military authorities had to adjust the interests of the population with the political and security interests of Yugoslavia in the territory of the Julian Region. The daily life of the population in this area was influenced by political relations between Yugoslavia and Italy, as well as by the relations between the Yugoslav Military Government and the Anglo-American Military Government.

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43 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 10, No. 6/2.

44 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 10, No. 6/8.

45 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 11, No. 5/1.

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