

CONTRABAND ON THE SLOVENIAN-ITALIAN BORDER IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD (1918-1941)

The article considers the phenomenon of corruption, its essence, causes and consequences. The social, Purposes of the article is to find out the reasons for the increase in smuggling on the Italian-Slovenian border after the First World War, to define smuggling, to study Slovenian-Italian cooperation in the fight against smuggling, establishing of the relevant Slovenian and Italian institutions and the Rapallo border with Italy (the northern-western section of the Slovenian border), to expand knowledge about the process of smuggling contraband goods and known smugglers, their relations with border guards on the Rapallo border, to study the echoes of smuggling on the Rapallo border in Slovenian literature. For this, general historical research methods are used - periodization, problem-chronological, comparative-historical, synchronistic, historical-genetic, historical-typological.

Results. *According to the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference, a number of treaties were concluded, including those concerning the Slovenian northern border. The treaty with Italy, signed in Rapallo in 1920, cut through ethnic Slovene territory so that close relatives, neighbors and friends were on both sides of the border, and land holdings were also divided. The border was established and fortified with barbed wire, concrete bunkers on the Italian side. Small-scale smuggling was carried out by women and children, mostly taken to Italy, due to the higher level of wealth there. Groups of armed smugglers engaged in large-scale cattle smuggling. In the early 1930s, the lira began to fall, and armed clashes began on the borders with deadly results. This epoch in the history of the Slovenian Littoral, where the the Rapallo border passed, found an echo in Slovenian literature.*

Conclusions. *Reasons for smuggling on the Italo-Slovenian border in 1918-1940 were the unfairness of the construction of the Rapallo border on Slovenian lands, difference in prices, low employment on both sides of the border. Italian and Slovenian state institutions cooperated in the fight against smuggling of a wide range of goods. Women, children and famous smugglers, border guards from both sides were involved in the smuggling. The most interesting stories of smugglers at the border became the subject of Slovenian literature.*

Key words: Rapallo border, fight against smuggling, causes of smuggling, contraband goods, cattle smuggling, accidents with smugglers.

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Introduction. In 1918-1920, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference in this number, Slovenian lands were divided between four countries – Italy (about a quarter of the territory and population), Austria (about 10%), Hungary (about 5%) and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kingdom of the SHS/Yugoslavia) (60%, with the capital Ljubljana). The Kingdom of SHS was the unification of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs with the Kingdom of Serbia, which took place on December 1, 1918.

The borders with the neighbors were finally settled by a few of treaties – the Saint-Germain Peace Treaty of 1919 with Austria,¹ the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920 with the Kingdom of Hungary,² and

¹ **The Saint-Germain Treaty** of September 10, 1919 established the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which took place after its capitulation on October 27, 1918, into a number of independent states – German Austria (since November 12, 1918 – the Austrian Republic), the Kingdom of Hungary, the Czechoslovak Republic, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (since October 1929, Yugoslavia).

² **The Treaty of Trianon** was signed on June 4, 1920, between the Allied Powers of World War I and Hungary. The latter agreed to significant restrictions and the loss of territories, including in favor of the Kingdom of the SHS and Czechoslovakia.

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the Rapallo Treaty of 1920, between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of the SHS.³

Slovenian lands assumed the function of the northern border of the newly created kingdom with neighboring states. It was laid quite unfairly, and it prevented the centuries-old free movement of the population all over its ethnic territory.

The entire border practically has cut Slovenian settlements through, and since it almost all the Slovenians had relatives on both sides of it. This also led to the fact that land holdings were cut up – fields, meadows, vineyards, forests, and the owners had to cross the border every day to work on their land. Owning land on both sides of the border made the life of the owners very difficult.

An important factor was low employment in industry, crafts and other urban activities in the border areas, which also had difficult geographical conditions – the Eastern Alps. The population along the borders did not have enough opportunities to find work in the sparsely populated valleys.

The general crisis of the 1930s, large debts or card losses forced many people to take risky actions. Someone got rich from smuggling, someone completely impoverished. Fines for smuggling were very high, and some even paid for it with their lives.

This phenomenon was also influenced by international events in the broader sense of the word, and not only relations between neighbors. Sanctions against Italy the Spanish Civil War effected it as well. Restrictions on trade with Italy accelerated illegal activity on the Italian-Slovenian border.

One of the results of the First World War was the equipment of borders and border services, customs offices at each official border crossing and the unification of documentation regarding the identification of a citizen and his property when crossing borders in Europe. Other illegal activities related to this borders were added to the violations of the rules of sale of certain monopoly and excise goods within one country. State authorities had to regularly report cases of illegal trade in goods inside and outside the country.

Prices for certain consumer goods, other items and livestock in Slovenia differed from all three neighboring countries. There was a shortage of various goods everywhere. At the same time, wages also differed.

The word “contraband” comes from the Latin phrase “contra bannum”, which means “despite the ban” (Rant, 2020). Smuggling has a broad definition. One of the definitions is the clandestine, illegal and criminal moving, loading or transportation of goods through a customs control point or across a state border. At such a control point, it was first necessary to pay customs duties, and since the creation of a centralized official state border customs, a customs tax.

Smuggling included monopoly goods designated by the country and goods prohibited to import.

It should be noted that the word “contraband” during the times of the Austrian Empire, as well as during the royal times, also meant the evasion of the payment of fees, which were established within

³ **The Treaty of Rapallo** was concluded on 12 November 1920 to settle territorial disputes on the northern coast of the Adriatic Sea, in Dalmatia and Venetia Giulia, in accordance with a secret agreement signed in London on 26 April 1915 by the Kingdom of Italy and the Entente. More than a quarter of the ethnic Slovenian lands fell under Italy.

the country for certain goods during their consumption. This especially applies to excise duty, tax on consumer products and food.

Many cases make it clear that smuggling was the most common. It was a very profitable business, and along the entire Slovenian northern border, many people made a living or side income from it. At the same time, this case was very dangerous – there were many criminal crimes and accidents.

Special Slovenian anti-smuggling institution

At the end of the First World War, crossings across borders were massive. This was connected not only and not so much with the local population, but with the return home of a huge number of soldiers of various nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The northern Slovenian borders, which were at the same time the borders of the Kingdom of SHS, were still being determined, and diplomatic and real battles were fought for them.

Under these conditions, on November 28, 1919, the Provincial Government for Slovenia issued an order to restrict smuggling. This was done in agreement with the three Belgrade ministries that had branches in Ljubljana, namely: the Ljubljana delegation of the Ministry of Finance, the Department of the Ministry of Food and Provincial Reconstruction and the Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The order defined what is considered contraband, violators and how it is punished. These definitions remain fair even today. In the first instance, such offenses were dealt with by the district authorities, and appeals were dealt with by the Criminal Chamber of the Food and Beverage Department in Ljubljana; if it was a criminal act, this issue was considered by the court (Naredba, 1919: 613).

At the same time, an order was issued by the Internal Affairs Committee, according to which a State institution against price gouging, reselling and smuggling, as it was officially called, was created in Ljubljana (Naredba, 1919a: 613-614).

Vekoslav Kershovan, an experienced security expert from the austrian times, became the first person to manage this institution. Branches were soon opened in border towns, in Gornja Radgona, as well as in all major cities of Slovenia – regional centers – Celje, Maribor and Murska Sobota. Sentences against violators were also published in the Slovenian State Bulletin. In some villages, residents themselves created so-called “action committees” to help the institution and its departments (Trobič, 2005: 326).

But it turned out that the expectations for this institution were too high, and in mid-April 1921 it was liquidated. Previous district administrations were again responsible for this direction, for which instructions were issued to prosecute violators (Naredba, 1921: 219).

Slovenian-Italian cooperation in the fight against smuggling

In order to combat smuggling, the neighboring countries sat down arranged negotiations several times and agreed to fight this phenomenon jointly.

On November 21, 1919, a conference of representatives of the Kingdoms of the SHS and Italy was held in Ljubljana. They agreed on the technical aspects of the convention on the establishment of a direct railway connection between the two countries, concluded in Trieste on June 3, 1919. There were eight appendices in the protocol. One of them regulated the customs service. In Annex IV it was written: “The Governments of both countries will not allow the existence of groups, intending to smuggle against a neighboring country, in their territories, and will not recognize the validity of insurance against the risks of smuggling. The financial administrations of both countries have also undertaken to monitor in their territories citizens of the other country who are already known as smugglers.” In the autumn of 1919, on the basis of this convention and protocol, regular railway traffic between the two Kingdoms was opened (Razglas, 1919; Razglas, 1919a, Razglas, 1920).

The next step of this kind was the Convention on Combating Smuggling and Violations of Financial Laws, signed on October 23, 1922 in Rome by representatives of the Kingdom of the SHS and the Kingdom of Italy. In 1923, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a collection of agreements between the two kingdoms (Rapalski ugovor, 1923: 29-34).

In particular, the procedure for reporting prepared and committed customs offenses was determined. In the Kingdom of the SHS, the General Directorate of Customs and the main customs offices of the provinces (including in Slovenia) were authorized for this purpose, and in neighboring countries – the General Directorate of Customs and Direct Taxes, the Main Customs Houses and the heads of border financial stations. Other agreements between the two kingdoms also contained provisions to stop smuggling and the black market.

Attention was also paid to the professional training of supervisory personnel. For example, on 14 September 1929 the Ministry of Finance asked the Home Office, the Treasury and the Police Department to train two Financial Control Officers in the detection of contraband because their skills were not sufficient. The Ministry of Internal Affairs forwarded the request to all competent officials. On October 24, 1929, the Ljubljana police department replied that there was nothing against this practice of improving the qualifications of employees (Čelik, 2013: 136).

The Rapallo border establishing and setting

The Rapallo Border got its name from the Rapallo Agreement. It lasted until April 1941, when Italian troops occupied the western half of Slovenia. The modern Italian-Slovenian border does not coincide with the Rapallo border. All border signs and fortifications are now tourist attractions.

In the interwar period, the Rapallo border strongly marked the surrounding areas. After the end of the First World War, it divided the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of the SHS, and with its construction, 12 Slovenian settlements, which until then belonged to the municipality of Žiri [Zhiri, “Acorns”), went to Italy. But the natives defied the foreign invaders; smuggling has become one of the main activities for survival and additional income.⁴

Janez Jeram [Yeram), who witnessed the establishment of this border in his early childhood, published his memoirs in 1969.

«Our house was separated from the neighbor’s house only by a small hayloft and a field. On the slope of this field, our neighbor’s son and I played war. We dug trenches, as we imagined them after the stories of our elders. The First World War had just ended, which left its mark on the children as well... In this game we used «military equipment»; a spoon served us as a shovel, an army aluminum bowl as a wheelbarrow. One day, however, our play together was interrupted by a higher force and separated us almost forever. At least we never played together again.

One gray late autumn day, a large group of soldiers in gray and green uniforms arrived. Large coils of barbed wire were carried on wooden poles. We were so engrossed in the game that we didn’t even notice the aliens until they started hammering an iron pole into the ground right next to us and attaching barbed wire to it. There was no time to think then. Like mice, we each ran in our own direction and left all our toys in place. The neighbor’s son ran to his house, which at that time remained on the Yugoslav side, and I ran to mine, which was in Italy at that time.

The new border interrupted our game and separated thousands of Slovenians from their homeland... The six-row barbed wire divided the fields and meadows and thus separated families, neighbors, friends and acquaintances» (Jeram, 1969: 230-231). There was even a case when the border was laid in the middle of the house, and one half had access to Italy, the other to the Yugoslav side.

According to Jeram’s memories, the barbed wire separated the lands for a little more than a year. At a time when there was practically no border control, local residents and people from distant places collected all the barbed wire that marked the state border. Since this time it was difficult to determine where the border really was.

When the border was recognized *de iure* in 1920, the authorities on the Italian side have set the customs, i.e. the financial guard – the «regia guardia di finanza». The border was guarded by numerous military outposts filled with soldiers. Ditches and trenches were dug not far from the border. Until then, there was no one on the Yugoslav side of the border. Only later the first financial guards in dark green uniforms arrived. They were mainly fugitive Russian militiamen who fled to Yugoslavia during the Russian revolution and Civil War (Jeram, 1969: 231). The Italian and Yugoslav guards did not take much care of the border crossings; they themselves were not particularly obedient. The Italians entered the villages on the Slovenian side in half an hour’s walk, and the Yugoslav soldiers did the same.

This «idyll» was stopped two years later by the demarcation commission. It drew the line correctly; geometers mapped it. Concrete milestones were also installed at a distance of about 100 m from each other. Border guards were strengthened and border barracks were built on both sides. Italians often searched houses along the border.

There was almost no «official» movement at the crossings then; the only exceptions were railway crossings. The first smugglers came in dark nights besides crossings, in groups of 10-15 people, ready for anything, even a fight. The Italian guards were afraid of them, so they left them alone. Fascist militia –

⁴ The municipality of Žiri [Zhiri] introduced a tourist route along the Rapallo border. Goods, that have crossed the border illegally countless times, now come to life as purchasable souvenirs.

«milizia confinaria» – also came to the border, but it was less strict with regard to smuggling. Its members were mainly from the poorest strata of the Italian population from the nearest villages. They smoked mainly Yugoslav cigarettes. For them, the border was a political matter.

Contraband goods and smugglers

From now on, everything that people carried across the border became contraband. There were different prices for food and other goods on both sides of borders. At the same time, tobacco, coffee, tea, sugar, flour and some other goods became cheaper in Yugoslavia, and in Italy – rice and wine, but not so much was transferred from Italy to Yugoslavia. Contraband goods mainly came from Yugoslavia to Italy.

Milan Trobič [Trobich], journalist of Radio Slovenia, in his investigation of smuggling in Slovenia, described the most common items illegally imported / exported: salt, tobacco, saccharin, sugar, eggs, mushrooms (Penny Bun mostly), coffee, wine and spirits, matches, carbide,⁵ cocaine and opium, lighters, various furs, silk and linen, money, horses and wood. Most of the trade turnover of contraband was occupied by salt and horses (Trobič, 2005: 211-276). All this could be sold on the Italian side several times more expensive, and it was possible to pay for it with your life. He also described cases of clashes between the smugglers themselves.

For example, the Emir family of Turkish roots from Macedonia ended up in the Italian occupation zone of slovenian Istria. Ante Emir mentions that some still lived better because of the so-called the «zonal allowance», which was supposed to guarantee that in Italy there would not be an excessive difference in wages across the border: «All over Istria, which was under Italy, they had white bread, white flour, they had a higher standard than the rest Slovenes in Yugoslavia... And they had, let me tell you, 5,000 dinars of «zonal [occupation] allowance». But the salary was already good as well, six, seven thousand... one interesting fact: the salary was 20% higher than in Yugoslavia.» In addition, he notices better living conditions in Istria (Zone B), not only because of higher wages than in Yugoslavia, but also because of a more accessible border with Italy and «contraband»: «The big difference was such. The Slovenians had the opportunity to travel to Italy four times a month. And they could also carry some things... There were those who took meat to Trieste and returned with new shoes, or someone carried cigarettes and returned with a gold chain, and then resold them. There was nothing lacking in Trieste» (Hrobat Virloget, 2021: 185).

Despite the strict regime, a slight privilege was observed. Land owners on both sides of the border were allowed to import up to 10 kg of flour from Yugoslavia. However, it was not specified how many times a month, and everyone interpreted as wished. In a few years, flour smuggling reached such a level that the border guards were no longer able to suppress it. Several tons of contraband flour were transported every day at a certain section of the border (Jeram, 1969: 232).

In the border settlements, you could also find smuggled schnapps (home made strong fruit alcohol), as well as “amore di frontiera” or “border love”, as the smuggled chocolate was called. “It was a very special story... Italian soldiers who guarded border, also entered Slovenian territory. They were mostly well-groomed young men in uniform, and many girls stared at them. They brought them chocolate, which was not in abundance in those days, it was really something special. However, many of these love stories ended tragically. Some girls went with the soldiers to Italy at the end of the war, and many soldiers “have melted like snow”. Thus the girls were left alone, sometimes with one or even two children” (Rant, 2020).

According to Ivanka Žackel [Zhakel], the highest value among smuggled goods was aliquid metal – mercury,⁶ which was sold in half-liter bottles. “At the same time, you should know that one such bottle weighs seven and a half kilograms” (Rant, 2020).

Marija Terpin Mlinar [Maria Terpin Mlinar], the curator of the city museum of Idrija, says that «mostly this was done alone, only in some cases, when cattle or wood were transported, several people participated in this. Children and women were the most suitable for smuggling. Of course, the border guards, which gladly took bribes, often played their role» (Bucik Ozebek, 2014).

Jelka Žejn [Yelka Zhein] from Medvedji Brd pri Rovtah [Medvedi Brd near Rovte, “Bear Hill near Rovte”] remembers how she once passed Italian soldiers by carrying 4 kg of butter under her armpits and in other tricky places. Since she was young and did not yet have real female curves, she made artificial

⁵ **Carbides** are used in the production of metal-ceramic and cast hard alloys for metalworking, rock drilling, etc. In reactions, they are used as alkali metal reducers, deoxidizers, and catalysts.

⁶ **Mercury** is mined in the slovenian city Idrija (Idriya). Idrija is a city on the UNESCO World Heritage List, where the second largest mercury deposit in the world is located.

breasts from two loaves of butter and even attracted the admiration of the Italian guards. «Come bella signorina» (What a beautiful girl), they teased her, thinking that she was not taking anything across the border. Her secret covers often included coffee and saccharin (Bucik Ozebek, 2014).

The famous smuggler Amalija Kacin [Amalia Katsin], who was even written about the song «Mici la Bionda» (mice Blonde), had well-trodden paths by her shop, which she set up on the very border in the village of Sovodenj [Sovoden']. One night, she allegedly sold as much as 60 kg of coffee across the border. She also sold dried mushrooms. The mountains in the Slovenian Littoral are rich in boletus mushrooms, which Italians adore. Therefore, she smuggled ed about 2,000 kg of dry (!) boletus mushrooms. She also used her trails to sell cocaine for medical purposes and tobacco in Gorica.

That tobacco was often bought by a family from the village of Mrzli Vrh [Mrzli Vrkh, "Frozen Top"]. The newly established border passed right through their house, so through the front door they went to Yugoslavia and through the back door to Italy. The family bought tobacco from Amalia and «imported» it to Italy through their own house. In the reverse direction more luxurious industrial products, silk, socks, "varikina", ⁷ fruits went... (Bucik Ozebek, 2014).

The local residents quickly realized that smuggling is a pretty profitable business, although the residents right on the border never became special masters of smuggling; they were too much in the eyes of the border guards. More was brought across the border for personal use than for resale.

Cattle smuggling

Whole herds of horses, oxen and other livestock were engaged in truly lucrative smuggling.

Aleksander Jankovič Potočnik [Aleksandr Yankovich Potochnik] recorded his grandfather's stories. Below the mountains along the border, near the village of Planina, where the terrain was more convenient, there was one of the famous crossings near the village of Trte na Medvedjem Brdu [Trte na Medvedyem Brdu, "Vineyards on Bear's Hill"]. Mostly horses were transferred here. The prerequisite for this operation was that the smugglers agreed in advance – with the buyer and the border guards. Smugglers had to have enough money to begin with – to first buy horses, and then to bribe guards so that they would not even accidentally appear nearby during the act (Bucik Ozebek, 2014).

Baldomir Bizjak [Baldomir Bizyak], a retired border expert of the Slovenian militia, recorded the story of Dominik Bogataj [Dominik Bogatay], from the village of Breznica [Breznitsa] in the border region of Žiri, which then belonged to Italy. He described in detail smuggling on both sides of the Rapallo border. From city Žiri to home house on countryside and further to Italy, he smuggled horses mostly, since the oxen were too slow, and they were easier for the border guards to notice. Horses were harnessed and transferred from Žiri across the border to city Gorica [Goritsa].

"When the horses were in Breznica, I harnessed them to the wagon and took them to St. Lucia (now Most na Soči) [Most na Sochi, "Socha Bridge"]. /... / It takes me no more than six hours from home to Gorica. With good horses, it sometimes took four hours. I went to Kanomlja [Kanomlya], Gorenja Trebuša [Gorenja Trebusha, "Mountaining Trebusha"], Čepovan [Chepovan] and then bigger village Solkan on the main road, and on the way to Gorica, to the Čibej [Chibej] inn. At Čibej, I gave up my horses, and put the horse's halters in bags. From there, the bags returned by bus from Šepetavec [Shepetavets] inn to Idrija. A few days later, there was a carriage at Šepetavec inn; from our end, trucks transported wood to Italy. We returned empty, with our carriages. Therefore, it was not a problem to bring the carriage and halters home from Šepetavec" (Čelik, 2013:152).

On November 18, 1919, the branch office of the district administration in Cerknica [Tserknitsa] ordered the local police stations to report smuggling along demarcation line ⁸ and measures to suppress this phenomenon. The military units of Cerknica, Lož [Lozh], Babno Polje Babno Polye], Dolenja vas [Dolenya vas], Nova vas, Bezuljak [Bezulyak] and the Snežnik [Snezhnik]

⁷ "Varikina" is a ready-to-use solution of sodium hypochlorite for removing stains, washing, and bleaching linen. Sodium hypochlorite has oxidizing, corrosive, antiseptic and bactericidal properties. It was first obtained in the 18th century, has a wide spectrum of action and can be used in many industries. Sodium hypochlorite is mainly used as an ingredient of bleaching agents in laundry, paper and textile, potato starch production. It has a strong bactericidal effect and guarantees effectiveness against bacteria, viruses and fungi, in addition, it is easy to use. It is used for disinfection of premises, water in swimming pools and cleaning of drinking water, cleaning of surfaces from blood stains. In horticulture, it is added to a solution for spraying trees against pests.

⁸ In the Slovenian Littoral, the demarcation line (i.e. a temporary delimitation in the area of the geopolitical border for the duration of negotiations and the signing of the corresponding agreement) was arbitrarily established by Italy, as it saw its border with the Kingdom of the SHS in the framework of the secret London Agreement of 1915. Italian troops in many places went too far, and under the terms of the official demarcation in accordance with the Treaty of Rapallo, they had to retreat to the designated positions. By the time the Rapallo Treaty was signed, the barbed wire had already been removed by local residents.

military outpost sent a message. All of them stated that the Italian side is engaged in smuggling, in particular, livestock. Anton Vatovec [Anton Vatovets], the commander of the Snežnik outpost, wrote in a report on November 28, 1919: they go to the forest by carriage, live that carriage in bushes, secretly drive both horses over the border and sell them there. If they suspect something, they return home with a loaded carriage. The soldiers do not have enough clothes and food, so they “have to live in poverty and walk everywhere” (Čelik, 2013: 143).

On February 4, 1922, a patrol from the station of Grahovo [Grakhovo] arrived in the village of Martinjak [Martinyak]. A group of smugglers drove a large herd of oxen along a country road in the direction of Cerknica. Seeing the patrolmen, they hid in the bushes. One shot at the patrolmen, but missed. They left the cattle and ran away. 18 oxen were caught by the patrolmen themselves, one was caught by another patrol who came to help them. Cattle were driven to customs on Rakek hill. On February 6, 1922, a public auction was held there, and the proceeds from the oxen were sent to the state treasury (Čelik, 2013: 143).

On August 5, 1922, five peasants from Hotedršica [Khotedrshchitsa] secretly transported several packs of tobacco to Italy. They were arrested by the Italian financial guard, and one of the arrested fled to the Slovenian side. The Italians ran after him and caught him, and the Slovenian border guards drove them to their side of the border. When the arrested smugglers paid a fine of 500 lira each, they were released home, as was reported to the district authorities on August 14, 1922 (Čelik, 2013: 144).

Armed clashes and accidents with smugglers on the Rapallo border

Stormy events took place in the area of the Poljanska Dolina [Polyanska Dolina, “Glade Valley”] near Rapallo border, when smuggling flourished here.

Jože Vodopivec [Yozhe Vodopivets], a policeman assigned to the police department in Gornja Radgona [Gornya Radgona], was killed by smugglers in the morning of October 31, 1919. This was reported by local police supervisor Jakob Kurent [Yakob Kurent] on November 2, 1919 (Čelik, 2013: 147).

On March 25, 1920, there was a shooting in Blegoš [Blegosh] due to the smuggling of horses to Italy. The smugglers started shooting at the patrol with revolvers. The patrol responded with shots, and killed one of them, Juri Tavčar [Yuri Tavchar] (Čelik, 2013: 143).

On March 3, 1922, at night, border guard Ivan Resjanski [Ivan Resyansky] was walking along the road to Logatec [Logatets]. Near the village of Planina, he detained three local residents who were moving to the border. Everyone carried a bag with plates and cups. He wanted to take them to the border post. In the village, one of them all the time turned to the soldier, who warned him three times not to turn around. When he did not comply and turned around again, the border guard shot and mortally wounded him (Čelik, 2013: 144).

Stanislav Molk from the village of Kačja Vas [Kachya Vas, «Snake Village»], near the Planina village, escaped from a military prison. The commander of the Planina station in his report dated March 5, 1922 stated that Stanislav Molk, a scout of the command of the Drava Division, was sentenced in Trieste⁹ to 4 to 12 years in prison (Čelik, 2013: 144). In a letter that fell into the hands of the authorities, he also described smuggling on the border and the social mood in the the Planina village that was in favor of the Italians. The district chief in the town of Logatec was tasked with verifying the veracity of the military fugitive’s testimony and on May 1, 1922, compiled two lists of persons who lived in the district. The first consisted of 19 people suspected of sympathizing with Italians; among them were all of the Windischgrätz family of the Hasberg manor. Another list contained 133 people, so-called «wellknown» smugglers.

Echoes of smuggling in Slovenian literature and oral tradition

In addition to written, a rich oral tradition has been preserved about cross-border smuggling in the interwar period. Fables were passed down from generation to generation, the participants are no longer present, and their stories are to be told by their children and grandchildren. Some of these memories were also recorded by journalists and writers. Sometimes such memories were published in magazines (Zrnec, 1995: 16). This materials have been treated in various local history collections (Jeram, 1969: 230-234) and novels.

In 1934, the popular novel by Bogomir Magajne [Magayne] called “Graničarji” (Borderers) (Magajna, 1934) was published in Celje. In 1988, Ivanka Cadež [Chadezh] wrote a novel with the characteristic title

⁹ **Trieste** is a Slovenian city that, among other, was captured by the Italians under the secret Treaty of London in 1915, when the Entente entered into "a futures agreement", i.e. selling Slovenian and Croatian lands to Italy in exchange for Italy entering the war against Austria, which led to the opening of the Sochan Front on Slovenian land near the modern border with Italy. More than 1 million people perished here in 1915-1918. Italy lost the war on this front, but after the end of the war gained the right to annex the lands specified in the Treaty of London.

“Kontrabant” (Contraband) (Čadež, 1988), where she describes such events on the border with Italy in the district of Cerklje [Tserklye].

In 1999, Tomaš Pavlič [Tomash Pavshich] published a book in Idrija called «Ob stari meji» (Along the Old Border), where he emphasized smuggling from both sides of the Rapallo border in the same Cerklje district. He also cited several examples of the brutal behavior of Slovenian border guards, which had even fatal consequences.

Smuggling was almost brought to an end by the gradual decline in the value of the Italian lira in the 1930s, and especially before World War II.

During this time, real tragedies began to happen on the border. Border guards on both sides were authorized to use firearms against those who cross the border illegally. Many smugglers and other criminals came under fire. These were the first victims of the approaching war. About this accidents many stories were told by relatives of participants (Jeram, 1969: 233).

For example, on October 30, 1932, in Leskovica [Leskovitsa], border guards arrested two people from Cerklje, who had driven to Črni Vrh [Cherny Vrkh, “Black Top”] in their own car. They left the car there, and then walked to Leskovica, where they were detained and taken to the station west of the village. Janko Moškot [Yanko Moshkot] was afraid of the fate of his car, that’s why he started to run away and was killed by a border guard.

Another such event was on June 21, 1933, when the border guards arrested Janez Frelj [Yanez Frelj] from Gorenji Novaki [Gorenyi Novaki]. A close neighbor accused him of smuggling. The border guards tortured him and then shot him when he was walking from the Italian border in his home direction.

On April 17, 1934, near the village of Javorje [Yavorye], border guards shot two Slovenians Mirko Simonič [Mirko Simonich] and Slavko Vogrič [Slavko Vogrich], who were now Italian citizens, in the back when they had just crossed the border (Pavšič, 1999: 62, 64, 105).

Janez Dolinar [Yanez Dolinar] in his memoirs «Prebliski skozi čas» (Glimpses through Time) could not pass by the smuggling that flourished in the vicinity of his native village in Poljanska Dolina. It was not only about the secret crossing of the border, but also the further sale of contraband goods (Dolinar, 2002: 34-36).

According to oral tradition, Frank’s grandmother from Poljane [Polyane] was also a smuggler, who visited women in labor and thus went around all the villages in Poljanska Dolina and the surrounding area. She sold saccharine until she was exposed and convicted. A folk song was even composed about her.

Elderly villagers in these places know how to tell that sometimes jealousy led to a fight between local boys and border guards who looked at local girls. Border guards married local girls, which is still evidenced by the Serbian and Croatian surnames of some families on the Rapallo border area – many border guards came to serve from the southern parts of Yugoslavia.

There was a well-known story of a young girl – lace merchant who was caught by the Italians when someone betrayed where she was going to cross the border. She was rumored to offend her Italian boyfriend; because she left him, and he decided to take revenge on her in this way (Rant, 2020).

On the night of April 21, 1934, the border patrol shot dead two local residents who were transporting a pair of horses to Italy, south of the village of Krnice [Krnitse]. They were Lovro Stanonik from Lovski Brd, and Matija Ramovš [Matiya Ramovsh] from Suša [Susha].

After their funeral, there were loud and resonant rumors that they died in great agony because they called for help. This did not agree with the official report of the border guards that they were killed while fleeing. Lovro’s father, Jurij Stanonik [Yuriy Stanonik], was a respectable person and a former member of the municipality committee. He took care of permission for the exhumation and autopsy of the bodies in two weeks. The examination established that the victims’ arm bones were broken and they were shot with three shots from a distance of no more than one meter.

After that, no one doubted the rumors about the involvement of Captain Jovanovič [Yovanovich], the commander of the border guard on the Trata mount near the village of Gorenja Vas [Gorenya Vas, “Mounting Village”]. Lovro, a famous smuggler, agreed with him that on certain days and nights he would direct his patrols in such a way that the border crossing would be safe. This time Captain broke his promise because he owed Lovro for a new carriage he used to drive at work (Čelik, 2013: 148). The event gained wide publicity, the liberal magazine “Jutro” [Yutro, “Morning”] even wrote about it (Vedno nove žrtve tihotapstva, 1934: 3). A relative of the murdered Lovro, a militiaman in Škofja Loka [Shkofya Loka], wrote a letter to the king Alexander I in Belgrade. The letter was signed by the relatives of the murdered.

In it, he extensively described the reasons that forced or encouraged the border population to smuggle. The letter did not reach the king (Čelik, 2013: 148). Perhaps the matter dragged on for too long, and the letter did not reach the king due to his murder in Marseille in October 1934, 5 months after the event.

On March 28, 1937, a group of nine men and boys secretly drove horses to Italy. Most of them were from the village of Podcerkev pri Starem trgu pri Ložu [Podtserkev near Stari Trg at Lozh], where they crossed the border. When they were returning from Italy, two of them got lost in the snow. The rest left them and returned to the Podcerkev for help. Local residents came to look for them and were able to find them and transport them home, but it was too late. They were cousins – Janez [Yanez] Strle from Viševak [Vishevek] and Stanko Strle from Podcerkev (Čelik, 2013: 147).

As the conflict between Yugoslavia and Italy escalated, the more the border became closed, the more smuggling also became difficult. The Italian army gradually but persistently built concrete fortifications along the Rapallo border. In response, Yugoslavia also started building fortifications, and everything was even more complicated. In 1940, smuggling stopped because Yugoslavia built a closed chain of bunkers and surrounded the border with wire fences.

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Today, Marija Terpin Mlinar and other workers of the City Museum of Idrija, participate in the international project «(Pre)contraband anthologies». In it, together with the Croatian Museum of Contemporary Art in Rijeka and the Italian Trieste Contemporanea gallery, stories about smuggling from different points of view are being discovered, studied and collected.

«Smuggling has certain patterns, also in terms of how the smugglers behave and how much they want to know about that legendary times. There are witnesses who know a lot about this, but for very different reasons they are not ready to talk, for some it is forbidden, for some it is a painful topic.

Smugglers chose the most convenient and safe ways to cross the border. As part of the international project, researchers also want to create a map with smuggling routes on the Rapallo border, which have not yet been thoroughly explored. «We only know that they were always at the right distance from the checkpoints,» emphasizes Marija Terpin Mlinar.

Conclusions. According to the decisions of the Paris Peace Conference, the Slovenian lands were divided between four countries – Italy, Austria, Hungary and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes /Yugoslavia. Slovenian lands assumed the function of the northern border of the newly created kingdom with neighboring states. The Treaty of Rapallo of 1920 defined the border between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of the SHS, at the same time it was the northwestern section of the Slovenian border.

A number of factors led to increased smuggling on the Italian-Slovenian border between 1918 and 1940. First, the injustice of laying the Rapallo border on Slovenian lands: the border literally cut Slovenian families, settlements and land ownerships. An important factor was low labor employment in border areas – sparsely populated valleys, which also had difficult geographical conditions – dense forests and the Eastern Alps, which facilitated secret border crossing. Smuggling was also caused by a significant difference in the prices of certain goods on both sides of the border. A higher standard of living in Italy led to an increased flow of goods in its direction. On the Slovenian side, for the local population it was a matter of survival, not profit.

Despite covering the border with barbed wire and concrete bunkers, it remained quite piercing. Smugglers managed to transport huge quantities of goods for various purposes and to drive whole herds of cattle. Despite the cooperation of anti-smuggling institutions on both sides of the border, bribery flourished among border guards.

The world economic crisis of 1929-1933 and the subsequent depression, the fall of the lira have painfully affected on the local population on both sides of the border, which led to an increase in the brutality of border guards against smugglers, to bloody incidents and accidents. Slovenian smugglers became legendary, and the most interesting stories of smugglers became the subject of Slovenian memoirs and works of art. Even today, the area around the former Rapallo border attracts tourists.

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КОНТРАБАНДА НА СЛОВЕНСЬКО-ІТАЛІЙСЬКОМУ КОРДОНІ У МІЖВОЄННИЙ ПЕРІОД (1918-1941)

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Мета статті полягає у з'ясуванні причин посилення контрабанди на італо-словенському кордоні після Першої світової війни, визначенні контрабанди, дослідженні словенсько-італійської співпраці у боротьбі з контрабандою і встановлення відповідних словенських і італійських установ і самого «рапальського» кордону з Італією (північно-західна ділянка словенського кордону), розширення знання про контрабандні товари, процес контрабанди і відомих контрабандистів, їхні відносини з прикордонниками на Рапальському кордоні, вивчення відлуння контрабанди на Рапальському кордоні в словенській літературі і усній традиції. Для цього використовуються загальноісторичні методи дослідження – періодизаційний, проблемно-хронологічний, синхроністичний, історико-генетичний, історико-типологічний.

Результати. За рішеннями Паризької мирної конференції було укладено низку договорів, у тому числі стосовно словенського північного кордону. Договір з Італією, підписаний у Рапалло у 1920 р., прорізав етнічну словенську територію так, що по обидві сторони кордону опинилися близькі родичі, сусіди і друзі, також були розділені землеволодіння. Кордон був встановлений і укріплений з колючим дротом, бетонними бункерами з італійської сторони. Дрібною контрабандою займалися жінки і діти, виносили здебільшого в Італію, через тамошній вищий рівень достатку. Великою контрабандою худоби займалися групи озброєних контрабандистів. На початку 1930-х рр, почалося падіння курсу ліри, і на кордонах почалися озброєні сутички зі смертельними результатами. Ця доба в історії Словенського Примор'я, де проходив «рапальський кордон», знайшла відлуння в словенській усній традиції, спогадах і художній літературі.

Висновки. Причинами посилення контрабанди на італо-словенському кордоні у 1918-1940 рр. була несправедливість прокладення Рапальського кордону по словенським землям, різниця в цінах і низька зайнятість по обидві сторони кордону. Італія і словенські філії державних установ Королівства СХС / Югославії співпрацювали у боротьбі з контрабандою широким спектром товарів. У процес контрабанди були залучені жінки, діти і знамениті контрабандисти, а також прикордонники з обох сторін. Найбільш цікаві історії контрабандистів, криваві сутички і нещасні випадки на кордоні стали предметом словенських спогадів і художніх творів.

Ключові слова: Рапальський кордон, боротьба з контрабандою, причини контрабанди, контрабандні товари, контрабанда худоби, нещасні випадки з контрабандистами на кордонах.