lived experiences of diplomats, the collection enriches our understanding of diplomacy as both a professional and deeply human endeavor. In sum, through its thoughtful selection of topics, methodological diversity, and innovative historiographical perspective, the editors have not only fulfilled but exceeded their stated objective. By highlighting pivotal events, processes, and personalities, they have successfully traced the evolution of Romanian diplomacy during Hobsbawm's „short 20th century", identifying its critical turning points and offering a nuanced, well-articulated account of its developmental trajectory.

Nemanja MITROVIĆ

Dominique Kirchner Reill, *Riječka kriza. Život nakon Habsburške monarhije*. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2024, 287.

"The history of the State of Fiume reveals the ruthless means and methods of imperialist policy," argued Zagreb University professor Ferdo Čulinović in the mid-twentieth century, recounting the events that had shaped the fate of this Adriatic city from the 1915 signing of the London Treaty through its annexation by Italy in 1924.[1] Written in the years after Rijeka had finally become part of the Yugoslav state, his account captured the spirit of an era shaped by the emergence of a new socialist order and the efforts to establish state legitimacy on the foundations of victory in the People's Liberation War. It also reflected Čulinović's distinctive approach to historiography, which relied heavily on the language of facts, while not shying away from reminding readers of the "lessons of history." Decades later, in his study of the Italian occupation of Yugoslav territories following the First World War, Dragoljub Živojinović concurred that Fiume's destiny was closely entwined with the imperialist ambitions of the Italian bourgeoisie. Thus, in a similar vein, both historians analyzed the fate of the city in light of Rome's imperial objectives. In Italian historiography, however, the dominant narrative about Fiume assumed a somewhat different character. It centered on the venture of Gabriele D'Annunzio and his legionaries in the city at the mouth of the Fiumara River (Rječina), framed against the looming shadow of Benito Mussolini's rise to power and the advent of fascism in Italy. "Danuncijada," as the Croatian writer Viktor Car Emin called it in his literary depiction of the events, was regarded as a pivotal moment in Italian hi-

[1] Following Dominique Kirchner Reill's practice in the English version of her book, the name Fiume, rather than Rijeka, will be used when referring to the city during the period under study.

story—a proto-fascist experiment that heralded the emergence of a politics of sacralization and mass nationalism led by a charismatic leader. Within the broader contours of European historiography, this perspective also exerted considerable influence. While the Fiume Crisis was frequently portrayed, in terms of international relations, as a diplomatic fiasco that repeatedly disrupted the Paris Peace Conference, within the interwar European framework, D'Annunzio's fifteen-month stay in Fiume was regarded as a symbol of the collapse of the liberal order and the rise of fascist ideology, which soon spread across the continent.

There is little doubt about these depictions. Fiume was indeed a focal point of Italian imperial policy and one of the central issues at the Peace Conference, while D'Annunzio's adventure played a significant role in the militarization of Italian, and by extension, European, political culture. Yet, as Dominique Kirchner Reill, professor of modern European history at the University of Miami, notes in her book *The Fiume Crisis: Life in the Wake of the Habsburg Empire* (*Riječka kriza: Život nakon Habsburške monarhije*), aspects of the city's history that do not fit neatly into these narratives have largely been neglected. In such accounts, Fiume hardly functions as a real place; rather, it becomes a moment of crystallization, a minor subplot in a grand narrative—an object rather than a subject. The lives of its residents between 1918 and 1921, however, reveal that they actively sought to shape their own fate amid the collapse of the Habsburg Empire's imperial structures. For Reill, their struggle over material resources, the question of sovereignty, the role of citizenship, the functioning of the school system, and numerous other episodes obscured by established interpretations serve to redefine the city's post–First World War history on both macro and micro levels. Her book, therefore, pursues multiple objectives. First, it seeks to critically examine the well-known sequence of events that led to the rise of charismatic fascism in Italy and Europe. Second, it aims to populate the history of Fiume with its residents and investigate how they responded to the challenges of the post-imperial moment in which the world found itself in the aftermath of the First World War. Finally, it seeks to place this Adriatic city within the broader context of postwar European history, where continental empires were disappearing from the map and the transition to new nation-states was anything but a smooth process.

Three parallel stories, Reill argues, have effectively concealed the life of Fiume's community from the horizon of history. Unsurprisingly, she adds, as they were simply too good not to be told. The first revolves around the diplomatic process concerning the so-called "Fiume question", the dispute over the city's fate after the First World War. Here, secret diplomacy, Woodrow Wilson's project for a new world order, competing national aspirations, the principle of self-determination, and Italy's imperial ambiti-

ons converge, with Fiume emerging as a catalyst in the breakdown of the principles of the Wilsonian liberal international order. The second story focuses on what unfolded on the ground in Fiume between the collapse of the Habsburg state in October 1918 and D'Annunzio's arrival in September 1919. It is a saga in which, over the course of barely ten days, four different entities each proclaim themselves the true representatives of the will of the city's inhabitants. Foreign correspondents dispatch reports of the turbulent events to the world, while rival local factions compete to persuade them of their own versions of the truth. Meanwhile, Allied troops occupy the city, nationalist agitation intensifies, and women gain the right to vote. In short, it is the story of Fiume as an unsolvable riddle. Its conclusion coincides with the beginning of the third account—the Italian poet's arrival—which lasts until his withdrawal from the city in January 1921. D'Annunzio's Fiume and the phenomenon of *fiumanesimo* embodied a novel fusion of anti-parliamentarianism, anti-conformism, anti-materialism, theological nationalism, and the cult of the soldier. Combined with authoritarian rule, the charismatic aura of the leader and the veterans' violence, all the pieces seem to have fallen into place—this was proto-fascism, with Fiume as its crucible. Underlying all three accounts, more or less explicitly, is the assumption that the city must be understood within the broader context of the emergence of nation-states and the ideology of nationalism that arose in the place of the fallen empires. But does shifting the perspective to the local level and examining the city's socio-economic history confirm this? Was extreme postwar nationalism truly the main driving force behind events in Fiume? How did the small city-state successfully resist the demands of the world powers for months, even before D'Annunzio came to power? Nationally motivated violence undoubtedly occurred, but why was it, as the author contends, surprisingly limited? How was national consolidation carried out in a city where more than half of the population did not speak Italian? What form did this consolidation take? And how was relatively stable civic peace maintained among the city's diverse national groups throughout this two-and-a-half-year period?

In answering these questions, Kirchner Reill emphasizes that the events in Fiume after 1918 cannot be explained without understanding the city's position within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. After the reorganization of the Habsburg state through the 1867 Compromise, the status of this Adriatic city was determined the following year by the Croatian–Hungarian Settlement. According to the so-called "Riječka krpica," as it was mockingly known in Croatian, Fiume functioned as a semi-independent city-state, administered by the local municipal council and a Hungarian governor directly accountable to Budapest. As a *corpus separatum* within the Kingdom of Hungary, the city experien-

ced a remarkable growth over the following half-century, marked by the influx of Hungarian capital, the construction of railway lines, the expansion of its port, factories, refineries, banks, and hospitals. By the time of the First World War, this transformation had turned what had been a small port town of around seventeen thousand inhabitants at the time of the Compromise into the ninth-largest port in continental Europe, with a population exceeding fifty thousand. Mass migration produced a distinct cosmopolitan culture—the streets of one of the principal hubs of global trade echoed with the sounds of a variety of languages: the local Fiuman dialect, Italian, Croatian, Slovenian, Hungarian, German, Czech, and Yiddish. Equally important, its residents were acutely aware of the significance of their own autonomy, as well as the privileges they enjoyed as subjects of the Habsburg Empire. Fiume's layered sovereignty was evident in everyday life. Thus, 41-year-old Antonio Allazetta, following his appointment as head accountant of the city's civic tax office, swore allegiance to the Emperor of Austria-Hungary, obedience to the laws of the Kingdom of Hungary, and loyalty to the Statute of Fiume. Of course, this was by no means a perfect balance of power. The Hungarian political elites actively worked toward the centralization of the Kingdom of Hungary, while those in Fiume resisted, with the local Autonomist Party dominating the city's political scene. Despite this, many residents recognized the benefits of the political and economic privileges that the imperial structures and protections entailed. It is therefore unsurprising that, for many, the Hungarian state was seen as a *madrepatria*. Accustomed to and familiar with what Kirchner Reill terms the "Austro-Hungarian-Fiume sovereignty triangle", the city's inhabitants were adept at leveraging the opportunities afforded by their status as a semi-autonomous city within a vast empire.

The collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918 did not extinguish the aspirations and habits of the people of Fiume. In the new context, they sought ways to preserve the existing infrastructural networks that had safeguarded their rights and enabled their prosperity. According to Kirchner Reill, these very efforts ultimately led to a turn toward Italy, the advocacy of annexation, and the development of a specific policy of *Italianness*. By examining various aspects of the everyday social, political, economic, and cultural life of Fiume's residents, she demonstrates that their nationalization was not the result of a predetermined impulse. It was a divergent process, in which practical decisions were at least as important, if not more so, than the sense of national belonging during a period of postwar ethnic and ideological radicalization. Through a series of chapters addressing money, legislative reforms, questions of local identity, and national propaganda, the author reconstructs the complex social dynamics on the ground. By citing the names, professions, and ages of Fiume's residents—or-

dinary citizens, soldiers, teachers, merchants, and politicians—the author brings their aspirations and ambitions, doubts and challenges to life, situating them within the broader processes in which the city found itself. Thus, for example, we learn that in the spring of 1919, in an attempt to control the currency system, the Italian National Council began stamping former Habsburg crowns with the Fiume seal in preparation for the planned annexation of the city by Italy. This was, however, of little concern to the twenty-five-year-old mechanic and veteran Benvenuto Del Bello, an Istrian of Italian descent, who at the end of the same year injected 450,000 counterfeit crowns into the system, more preoccupied with his own material well-being than with the annexationist efforts of the city authorities. When the process of aligning Fiume's legislation with Italian law began, the right to divorce was retained in the city's legislative provisions—something unimaginable in Italy, which the city sought to join. For the locals, however, divorce was a perfectly ordinary procedure. Thus, in September 1918, thirty-eight-year-old railway worker Giuseppe Német exercised this right, claiming that his wife constantly harassed him and that he could no longer live with her. Another example is the tightening of the conditions for obtaining Fiumian citizenship or employment in the city, a policy that disadvantaged many Yugoslavs, Hungarians, and Germans. Elements of this change were rooted in the national policies of the city authorities, but other circumstances were also frequently taken into account. When the Italian teacher from Veneto Francesco Pasculli was denied employment, the Italian National Council justified its decision by stating that priority should be given to qualified Fiumian teachers. At the time of economic hardship, local origin took precedence over nationality. Even the symbolism of the city's Italianization had its hidden facets. When a law enacted in March 1919 permitted the change of first and last names, some Fiumians took advantage of it: Giovanni Marussich decided to become Giovanni Marussi and Francesco Ursić became Francesco Dal Fiume. Yet such individuals were in the minority; over the following two years, only 161 requests for name changes were recorded. Even some of the city's leading nationalists considered such measures unnecessary; the president of the National Council remained Antonio Grossich. Advocating for the city's annexation by Italy clearly did not require abandoning one's own Fiumian, multiethnic heritage.

The history of the Fiume Crisis, as recounted by Dominique Kirchner Reill, demonstrates that the city's first postwar years cannot be understood as a rupture, with the collapse of the Habsburg Empire serving as a turning point for the triumph of nationalism. Instead, Fiume emerges as a stage for competing political projects in which the victory of any single initiative was far from certain. The projects pursued by Fiume's residents reveal that they had their own visi-

on of the future. While this vision may have included the city's eventual annexation to Italy, the Fiumians sought such an outcome on terms they themselves established. They aimed to preserve their autonomy, traditions, and privileges, the very mechanisms that had enabled the city's prosperity over previous decades, within the framework of the Italian kingdom. The book's subtitle underscores this point: life in the wake of the Habsburg monarchy did not immediately become life without it. The Fiumians continued to act politically, legislatively, and culturally within the structures left to them by the former empire. They were unwilling to accept a purely nationalized interpretation of their own destinies, an interpretation that, in historical narratives, continued to erase them as active subjects of history. Following the victory of fascism in Italy, the city was annexed under the diktat of Rome; the political project envisioned by the Fiumiani was extinguished, its diverse population gradually homogenized, and the contingency that had characterized their actions between 1918 and 1921 erased. But, by illuminating these lost episodes, Kirchner Reill challenges existing interpretations of Fiume's past. In the broader European context, she questions the seemingly smooth transition from the great empires to the new nation-states, analyzing the moment of post-imperial chaos from below. In this lies the greatest value of her work.

Vukašin MARIĆ

Штефан Бергер, *Историографија, национализам и идентитет. Компаративне и транснационалне перспективе*. Београд: Институт за европске студије; Чигоја штампа, 2024, 377.
and Stefan Berger, *Historiografija, nacionalizam i identitet. Komparativne i transnacionalne perspektive*. Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2024, 289.

Almost simultaneously, Serbian and Croatian audiences have been presented with a collection of the most significant methodological and survey texts by the German historian Stefan Berger (1964–). This simultaneity is not coincidental but is the result of the work of Professor Michael Antolović, who selected, translated, and edited Berger's texts for both editions. Before turning to the book itself, it is worth briefly considering Berger's overall oeuvre to better understand the significance of the first appearance of his texts in our language, and to place this selection within the context of his decades-long historiographical production.

Although born in the Federal Republic of Germany, Berger spent a significant part of his life (1987–2011) as a