

FASCIST VIOLENCE IN ZADAR BEFORE THE MARCH ON ROME.
AUTHORITY AND MASCULINITY IN A POST-IMPERIAL SETTING

Andreas GUIDI

École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 54 Boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris, France
e-mail: andreasguidi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role played by political violence in the emergence of fascism in post-WWI Zadar. In a former multi-ethnic imperial setting, fascist violence in the early years of Italian occupation led to a redefinition of the local political landscape and to a new performance of masculinity within the political field. The threats, the actions, and the language of violence became the distinctive marker of fascism and they allowed this faction to marginalize local competitors, such as the political representatives of the Serbs and Croats in town or the Republican Party. Moreover, violence was crucial to achieving a symbiosis with the ruling conservative elite of Zadar anticipating, and facilitating, the seizure of power in 1922. Through the use of archival material and the local press, the article provides a close reading of episodes of violence involving fascists. These used a new semantic and praxis of violence to create a convergence between masculine honor and the honor of the new national Italian sovereignty in Zadar.

Keywords: violence, fascism, Zadar, Dalmatia, masculinity, politics

VIOLENZA FASCISTA A ZARA PRIMA DELLA MARCIA SU ROMA.
AUTORITÀ E MASCOLINITÀ IN UN CONTESTO POST-IMPERIALE

SINTESI

Questo articolo analizza il ruolo della violenza politica nell'ambito dello sviluppo del fascismo a Zara dopo la Prima guerra mondiale. In un contesto post-imperiale e multietnico, la violenza fascista nei primi anni dell'occupazione italiana porta a una ridefinizione del paesaggio politico locale e a una nuova performance della mascolinità in politica. Le minacce, le azioni e il linguaggio della violenza diventano una caratteristica distintiva del fascismo e permettono a questa fazione di marginalizzare avversari locali, come i rappresentanti politici di serbi e croati in città o il Partito Repubblicano. Inoltre, la violenza è cruciale per arrivare a una simbiosi con l'élite conservatrice al potere a Zara anticipando – e facilitando – la presa del potere nel 1922. Attraverso l'uso di fonti d'archivio e della stampa locale, l'articolo offre un'analisi dettagliata degli episodi di

violenza che coinvolgono fascisti. Questi ultimi usano una nuova semantica e una nuova prassi della violenza per creare una convergenza fra l'onore della mascolinità e l'onore della nuova sovranità nazionale italiana a Zara.

Parole chiave: violenza, fascismo, Zara, Dalmazia, mascolinità, politica

INTRODUCTION

We are tired. Zadar has been annexed by Italy and, as tolerant as one can be toward the foreigners (esotici) that proliferate in the streets, one cannot tolerate that they continue to display the signs of their origin. There are too many shops frequented by Italians and unconsciously supported by officials and soldiers of the Royal [Italian] Army, whose owners keep on propagating hate and rancor to our damage. There are too many Croatian signs, too many newsvendors that spread poison and plague; too many houses that should belong to [Italian] refugees while they are still inhabited by families who persecuted our brothers. There are too many restaurants where the owners try to stage pro-Yugoslav demonstrations after serving nectar and ambrosia to their Mongolic guests. All of this must stop, as well as the apathy of many more or less opportunistic citizens who, during solemn occasions, do not expose at their windows the three-colored flag of the Fatherland. A decision is needed because otherwise the initiative will be taken by the fascists. Got the point?¹

This article appeared on a local newspaper in Zadar in June 1921. It is one of the first statements from the press of the Dalmatian town in which fascists appear as a political entity. In this text, many aspects of everyday life in post-Habsburg Zadar are listed and stigmatized as unbearable. The explicit red thread is that the Croatian (and broadly speaking Yugoslav) presence in town was not tolerated. Interestingly, however, the criticism was directed against apathetic “opportunists” as well. This term likely refers to individuals who, regardless of their ethnicity, were still relatively indifferent (Zahra, 2010) to an identification with the nation. Thus, this category also included Italian speakers who did not perform their “Italianness” properly, that is through the specific code of patriotism hailed by the fascists. The latter emerge from the text as an ambiguous element in between the first person, with which the article begins, and the third person, in which it ends. Thus, the author voices the discontent of the entire “patriotic” population of Zadar and

1 L'Adriatico, 1. 6. 1921: Siamo stanchi.

sees the fascists as the instance within this population that can settle the issues tormenting the town. On another level, the text can be interpreted as a tension between the anxiety of social disorder and the apology of violence evoked to end it. Starting from these considerations, this article scrutinizes fascist violence as a key to interpret the complex political landscape of Zadar after the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, on the way to the Treaty of Rapallo of 1920 which sealed the Italian sovereignty in the town. Moreover, the article discusses the struggle of fascism for reaching a dominant position among the political factions that remained active in the aftermath of the Treaty.

As the newspaper quoted above suggests, the situation in Zadar was still quite unstable in 1921. Following the diplomatic agreement of Rapallo, several institutions and actors negotiated their role in a new political and social landscape. Against this background, the use of intimidation and violence, both verbal and physical, became a resource for the rising fascist movement. By competing with other factions, violence allowed fascism to gain visibility through its transformative capacity. It became identified as a force which could intervene in the local public space bypassing political and diplomatic stasis. Most importantly, threats and actions of violence became increasingly linked with a marker of active *Italianità*, an element which would fulfill the empty promises of diplomats and established politicians in terms of national sovereignty.

A close reading of episodes of violence requires considering fascism a “community of action”, for which its praxis is a central element. Fascism, in other words, “cannot be understood without the concrete situation to which the attitudes and the actions of the fascists relate” (Reichardt, 2014, 75). Violence within fascism has been widely studied as one of its constitutive elements, as an “organization, as a mentality, as a political culture and as a style of life and struggle, to say nothing of the fact that it was the main reason for its triumph” (Gentile, 2013, 85). In recent years, Giulia Albanese offered a new perspective that put a particular stress on the period just before and just after the March on Rome (Albanese, 2001; Albanese, 2003; Albanese, 2006; Albanese, 2012; Albanese, 2014).

In these and other classic works, however, Zadar and Dalmatia remain marginal (Vivarelli, 1965; Lyttelton, 1973; Gentile, 1989). This neglecting is common in more recent studies that see fascist violence as, at the same time, a transnational anti-communist praxis (Traverso, 2008), or the main factor of convergence between the *squadrismo* and the conservative state institutions (Ebner, 2010), for which the broader national level is predominant. The marginality of Zadar is, however, more surprising in studies explicitly centered on “borderland fascism” and irredentism in the Northern Adriatic (Sluga, 2003; Wörsdörfer, 2004; Cattaruzza, 2007; Verginella, 2016). An exception is Luciano Monzali’s study on Dalmatia, although fascism is represented as an almost collateral entity in the shadow of the local political elite’s capacity to rule until the balance of power on the national level turned in Mussolini’s favor (Monzali, 2007; for a different interpretation see: Guidi, 2016).

The focus on a locality like Zadar here is motivated by the assumption that “[m]uch of the struggle over what Fascism stood for and over the direction the movement should take was played out at the local level” (Corner, 2012, 3). This choice allows to scrutinize the relationship between provincial and metropolitan politics, the landscape of loyalties

and polarizations in a multi-ethnic setting, as well as the transformation of authority and activism in a post-Habsburg town.

A closer look at the praxis and discourse of fascist violence in Zadar, though, makes it necessary to include reflections on gender, since masculinity emerges prominently from the sources. In studies on Italian fascism, gender is still overshadowed by “neutral” categories such as the “collective” or the “mass” (Passmore, 2011) or discussed within women’s history (De Grazia, 1992; Pickering-Iazzi, 1995; Wilson, 2003). In regard to masculinity, the historians’ attention was mainly drawn to the construction of a “new man” after the seizure of power through the cult of sport or youth, but less to the aftermath of World War I, when fascism was emerging and struggling for gaining new adherents. For sure, this aspect is to be placed in a historical development of a nationalized and violence-prone masculinity that anticipates fascism (Bellassai, 2005) and dates back at least to the process of nation building in the 19th century (Banti, 2005). Such stereotypes evolved at an accelerated pace at the turn of the twentieth century, and the reenactment of a “warrior” profile ready to use violence developed from a sense of masculine decadence before, and especially during World War I, until it was coopted by fascism (Mosse, 1996).

This was not a peculiarity of the Italian state. In Zadar, as elsewhere in the Habsburg Empire, previous gymnastic and shooting clubs were often bound in the formation of manly collectivities on the basis of ethnic belonging and the cult of the nation. For example, an Italian *Società dei Bersaglieri* was opened as early as 1871. It replicated forms of sociability of a military unit (but also its cultural praxis such as the fanfare) in the Kingdom of Italy, although as a mere cultural association due towards its being in Austrian territory (Ricciardi, 1999). Later on, Croatian activists founded the local branch of the *Hrvatski Sokol* (Mendeš, 1999). However, these spaces of activism and collective identifications emerged in a different international context and relied on a different relationship to violence, which was not practiced openly in the public space.

The crossed reading on violence and masculinity in Zadar thus intersects the heritage of a post-Habsburg multi-ethnic setting, which was transformed by fascism through its interactions with other entities. Episodes of violence in Zadar between 1920 and 1922 not only prompted the passage from imperial to national, multilingual to Italian politics. They also shaped a new image of masculinity in politics which, in turn, helped impose the legitimacy of the new, post-war order. In other words, violence was a tool used against elements targeted as incompatible with the national body envisioned by fascism (Reichardt, 2002, 661–673), but also a way to reclaim authority and power by imposing a new praxis of masculinity against rival Italian politicians. The focus of the article is thus situated in the intermediary phase between violence as a legacy of World War I and the production of the so called “new man” by the fascists in power.

ZADAR AFTER WORLD WAR I

Dalmatia, and Zadar in particular, acquired a key symbolic and rhetoric emphasis for Italian politics after the armistice of November 1918. Already before World War I, irredentist agitators included it, together with Dalmatia, in the imagined national space,

and Italy's entry in the war in 1915 represented the peak of such rhetoric (Federzoni, 1915; see also Dainelli, 1915). In a pattern observable in many European contexts before, during, and especially after the war, a new political language influenced by the "Wilsonian moment" (Manela, 2007) suggested that nations could gain what empires could lose, namely the legitimization of sovereignty. In the Italian-versus-Habsburg case, this rationale was to be based on past historic rights (the Venetian and Roman past), achieved through warfare, and secured through a post-war order that would reinforce the idea of ethnic homogeneity within the state boundaries.

Already before the end of the conflict, diplomatic discussions about the fate of Zadar and Dalmatia were ongoing and tense. The scenarios changed from ceding a large portion of Dalmatia to Italy according to the secret London Pact of April 1915 between Italy and the *Entente*, toward Woodrow Wilson's quite different position on the Dalmatian question from 1917 onwards. Straight after the armistice of 1918, the US American president proposed to offer the whole Dalmatian coast to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS, later called Yugoslavia) with the exception of Zadar, "in order to acknowledge and keep upright the Italian character of the town" (ACS, MI, A5 MFD, b. 3, f. 12/6, 10. 11. 1919; Bralić, 2015). According to Wilson's project, Zadar was to become a free city under the supervision of the International Community, with privileged links to the Yugoslav State surrounding it.

All these plans, as well as the early diplomatic talks at the Peace Conference of Versailles in winter 1918-1919 were confronted with the uncertain reality and the relation of power in flux on the ground (Bralić, 2006). As soon as Italian warships arrived in Zadar in November 1918, Admiral Enrico Millo, the first military governor of Zadar, started to implement repressive measures (Peričić, 1973; Ivoš, 1999; Pupo, 2009a; Pupo, 2009b). These aimed at imposing an Italian character on the occupied territories to raise more solid claims at the diplomatic negotiations. In fact, Zadar had already been ruled through a state of emergency during the Great War, which included increasing censorship, surveillance, limitations to freedom of movement and even forced displacement for some elements of the local population.² Therefore, in a way Millo continued the repressive policy of the Habsburgs in a post-war context. The Admiral banned newspapers in Croatian, closed the local *Sokol* club, while his forces searched places such as the Croatian Kindergarten, the Civil Courts, and the Monastery of Saint Michael, deemed exposed to anti-Italian propaganda (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 56, f. 8/2, 23. 6. 1920).

The situation in Zadar was furthermore directly linked to the developments in other territories under Italian occupation, especially Fiume. In September 1919, the poet and "war hero" Gabriele D'Annunzio occupied Fiume with some hundred paramilitary volunteers called *legionary*, and he then prepared an expedition to Zadar in November. There,

2 The most dramatic episode was a raid by the Austrian authorities during the *Julikrise* of 1914. Hundreds of inhabitants, from peasants to political leaders suspected of pro-Serbian sedition, were transported mostly to Maribor. The Dalmatian deputy Juraj Biankini described these events a few years later as a clear example of widespread violence used by the state (of emergency) on civilians (Lacmanović-Heydenreuter 2011, 165–166).

he met Millo and talked to a crowd that included many ardent supporters ready to act at his command. The Italian police reported shouts against the Italian government and in favor of D'Annunzio, but no significant incidents occurred (ACS, MI, A5 MFD, b. 3, f. 12/6, 26. 11. 1919). Through this action and its discursive representation, Zadar became associated with Fiume as a sacred site of *Italianità* – D'Annunzio often referred to it as *Zara la Santa* (the Holy) – that had to be defended at any cost. The Dalmatian town would thus provide an outpost from which Italy should continue the struggle for a wider territory regardless of the outcome of the then ongoing diplomatic negotiations with the Kingdom SHS. Dalmatia was thus at the core of the notion of *Vittoria Mutilata*, the “mutilated victory” resulting from sacrifice on the battlefield with unsatisfactory territorial gains. This “mobilizing power of defeat” (Gerwarth & Horne, 2012, 3) mostly related to the perception of injustice in the distribution of the spoils of the Habsburg Empire. It coexisted, however, with a self-portrait based on victorious heroism, which these irredentist groups elaborated through an apology of violence supposed to fulfill the nationalist tasks for which the Great War was fought. Thus, the setting of Zadar facilitated the formation and the praxis of paramilitary groups, also due to the fact that state military institutions were yet to be efficiently implanted.

An important event in this broader context was the assassination of two Italian citizens, Tommaso Gulli and Aldo Rossi, in Split in July 1920. Only one day after this incident, abrupt violence directed against “Slavs” broke out in Trieste, culminating in the fire of the Hotel Balkan hosting the *Narodni Dom*, the most important Slovenian institution in the city. The Tuscan fascist leader in Trieste, Francesco Giunta, claimed his movement's decisive role in this action, deemed the “baptism of organized *squadristo*” (De Felice, 1965, 624). Violence erupted in Zadar as well. Although the town was even closer to Split, the reaction to the murder of Gulli and Rossi was not as fierce as in Trieste. This is how Millo notified the Italian government about the events:

In Zadar, the crowd has attacked and pillaged some stores, smashed some windows and doors, set a small and old wooden canopy on fire, all of which belonged to Yugoslavs STOP no wounded STOP the order has been reestablished through the troops whose conduct, together with the Fiuman battalion was very disciplined STOP I will inquire into the damage and take care of it (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 50, f. 16/7, 16. 7. 1920).

One element emerging from this account is that Millo had no serious intention to counter or condemn this expression of violence. In fact, the action of the crowd merely intensified on a less institutionalized level the repressive measures he had taken in regard to Serbs and Croats in Zadar. Millo's depiction of the events is characterized by a certain ambiguity as to who was involved in the disorders. Whereas the presence of later fascist activists can be taken for granted, contrary to the events in Trieste the *squadracce* do not appear in the source. Neither did a local newspaper article on the ceremony in Zara on July 14 in memory of the two victims mention fascists. Interestingly, the newspaper edited by the irredentist and future fascist leader Michelangelo

Zimolo represented this solemn homage without linking a gendered language to the ideal of violence. Whereas all those sitting in the front rows of the church where the ceremony took place were men (*Arditi* – veterans of WWI, sailors, *Carabinieri*, soldiers of army and navy, the army's fanfare, *legionari*, etc.), a sense of religious veneration for the “victims”, “martyrs”, “heroes” was not yet radicalized in a rhetoric of violence or vengeance.³ Moreover, the role of the “Fiuman Battalion” – D’Annunzio’s followers in town – remains quite ambiguous. One could speculate about their attitude vis-à-vis the regular troops, whether the “discipline” quoted above refers to an active participation in the riot without degeneration, or to a contribution to the reestablishment of public order. This should not necessarily be interpreted as a paradox or a contradiction, but rather as a sign of the blurriness of order and disorder in the months between the landing of Italian troops in late 1918 and the agreement of Rapallo between Italy and the Kingdom SHS two years later.

Thus, the prelude to the emergence of fascism in Zadar was characterized by two features. On the one hand, violence in terms of state repression as well as a high number of military – and, after 1918, paramilitary – forces had become a prominent element in the repertoire of rule in both the last Habsburg and the first Italian years. Weapons became increasingly visible in the public space, and they were meant both as a way of threatening civilians and as a way to grant “public security”, although the boundaries between the two dynamics were often not clear-cut.

On the other hand, like in Fiume but unlike other newly occupied provinces, the Italian state represented an ambiguous reference from the very beginning of the occupation. Whereas the population of Zadar identifying with Italian sentiments supported the annexation quite unanimously, the capacity of the Italian state and its government to represent its interests and that of Italians in Dalmatia in general raised many doubts. This concerned the old local elite, although it was a privileged partner in the eyes of Rome for settling the terms of state integration, but also, and especially, the hardliner irredentists. These latter claimed to speak in the name of the Nation and, following their leader D’Annunzio, started to criticize both the local and the national authorities in order to find their own profile in the political arena.

THE EMERGENCE OF FASCISM

In this context, some fascist groups began to emerge in Zadar as early as April 1919. The degree of actual commitment of the members, their number, and their everyday activities in town is difficult to reconstruct on the basis of scarce and fragmented information. Some accounts optimistically highlight an early and rapid adherence to fascism, as well as exchanges and contacts in the form of participation to fascist gatherings organized in the Peninsula (ACS, MRF, b. 43, f. 113, 16. 4. 1919). At the same time, several other notes reveal logistic and financial scarcity (ACS, MRF, b. 43, f. 113, 5. 7. 1919) and non-linear ideological trajectories among the prominent members.

3 La vita in Dalmazia, July 1920: Per l’assassinio di Spalato a Zara.

This complexity mirrors the relationship between the two main figures of Italy's extra parliamentary politics of 1920, Mussolini and D'Annunzio, which mixed elements of symbiosis and of rivalry (De Felice, 1965, 545–598; Gentile, 1975, 166–184). One crucial difference emerged in the direct aftermath of the Treaty of Rapallo, with Mussolini pragmatically welcoming its terms on the columns of *Il Popolo d'Italia* (Giannini, 1921, 10) and D'Annunzio accusing the Italian government of betraying the Dalmatian irredentist cause. After the end of his rule in Fiume on Christmas 1920, D'Annunzio also mobilized a discourse on violence with a new, more aggressive tone, idealizing the popular resistance of the inhabitants of Zadar throwing rocks at the Italian army which was implementing the Treaty of Rapallo and evacuating occupied territories (D'Annunzio, 1974, 400–403). Rocks were then opposed to rifles which came to represent a State violence guilty of imposing an unjust agreement. Interestingly, D'Annunzio included women as positive actors of violence, something that disappeared wherever such episodes were commented upon by fascists later on.

At first, the nebulous faction opposed to the terms of the Treaty of Rapallo was also the one more prone to the rhetoric and the use of violence. After the evacuation of Fiume, the identification previously dominated by D'Annunzio now revealed a more nuanced profile along two main components. One identified with nationalist republicanism, the other one intensified the relationship with the fascist movement in Italy. The first test for this condominium were the parliamentary elections of May 1921, through which the population of Italian Zadar was asked to send its representative to a national legislative institution within a multi-party system.

At the national level, Mussolini steered its movement toward an alliance with conservative forces around the coalition named *Blocchi Nazionali*. This move marked a success in terms of seats gained in the Parliament, but also created an ambiguous bond to Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti, who was criticized by intransigent irredentist circles close to D'Annunzio. In Zadar, given the delicate diplomatic status of the city, local and state institutions put significant efforts in creating consensus around one single list called *Unione Nazionale*, including members from the whole range of the city's factions. At first, fascists and republicans showed interest in cooperating with the local elite composed of Italian politicians already represented in Habsburg institutions before 1914. This shows that there was no mutual ideological veto between conservatives and fascists, although a final agreement was not reached due to irreconcilable positions on the choice of the delegate in the list to be sent to Rome (Monzali, 2007, 300–310).

Eventually, fascists and republicans boycotted the elections, a choice that forced them to motivate their distance from the *Unione*. Interestingly, such pressure for defining an own political identity heavily relied on the rhetoric of violence. Only a few days after the elections, an article appearing on the new local newspaper *L'Adriatico* (co-edited by fascists and republicans) replied to criticism on the side of the *Unione*, which had discredited the boycotters calling them “*minorenni*” (minors) and “*bamboccioni*”, a term which designates idle and immature men. The self-portrait appearing on the *Adriatico* replied:

these minors are the remains of that holy malaria [in Triest's dialect, “bad boys”] that smashed the Croats' heads and threw stones at Austrian policemen [...]. The lazy

*kids made the Croatian ghost vanish in a second, without hesitating, in an elastic and dynamic way.*⁴

The retrospective apology of violence constructed a new ideal of activism centered on masculinity. Dynamism, instinct, youth vigor and force were highlighted to discredit the conservative elite, who had used the language of masculine mature “wisdom” and “experience” against their competitors. In the fascist-republican reply, this elite is described as a corrupted model consisting of idleness, servility, betrayal. Moreover, the positive markers of masculinity based on the readiness to use violence were supposed to serve equally idealized, impersonal, feminized elements such as the “holy Zadar”, “Mother Italy”, “Sacred Dalmatia”, etc.

Violence was not simply projected on the past as a distinctive sign of activism against Habsburg authorities and other ethnic groups, but also a practice used to transform local politics in the present. In April 1921, after it became clear that no agreement could be reached with the *Unione*, the printing office preparing propaganda material for the list was attacked and burned down. The authorities reacted and sanctioned four persons explicitly profiled as fascists, although they were released soon afterwards (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 68Bis, f. 8/15, 18. 4. 1921).

At the beginning, the *Unione* did not actually include the whole range of political factions present in Zadar in 1921, but only those who managed to obtain legitimacy in the eyes of the Italian state authorities, represented in Zadar by the *Commissario Civile* Corrado Bonfanti-Linares. In fact, the main target of violence at this point was still the non-Italian(ized) population of Zadar. For fascists and republicans, but also for Bonfanti-Linares, Croats and Serbs should not be explicitly represented in the local political field. During the early phase of the electoral campaign in spring 1921, there was indeed an attempt by the landowner Conte Alfonso Borelli to create a list appealing the lower-class population of Croats and Serbs in Zadar, but he withdrew a few weeks before the election day. Borelli, the descendant of an aristocratic family who had already been in positions of power in the nineteenth century, had chosen crossed hoe and shovel as a symbol in order to attract peasants. He complained about being victim of threats of physical aggression and “terror” during the campaign. The civil commissary Bonfanti admitted that “fifteen fascists, mostly students” had taken part in an intimidation, but minimized the withdrawal of the list and related it to an intervention of Yugoslav state authorities in order to avoid diplomatic tension with Italy. Bonfanti claimed that “no violence” occurred and represented the event as a small accident (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 68bis, f. 8/15, 3. 5. 1921; 4. 5. 1921).

To sum up, fascist violence was already a constitutive element in defining the balance of power in local politics in 1921. Of course, this was not peculiar to Zadar. This year in Italy saw the peak of violent confrontations between the far left and the far right, the latter being protected or at least not hampered by state institutions in spreading terror among the local population. In fact, compared to other settings along Italy’s Eastern Borderland,

4 L’Adriatico, 21. 5. 1921: I minorenni.

one could argue that the degree of violence in Zadar was significantly lower, and precisely the limits of violence can allow for a better understanding of the place of this setting in the new Italian political space.

PEAKS AND LIMITS OF FASCIST VIOLENCE

The article quoted at the beginning dates to only a few days after the May 1921 elections. This phase marks a transition during which violence became the main distinctive element of fascist political actions. Violence was not anymore simply a legacy of war experiences, it became an element of self-representation for a movement with ambitions within party politics. In July 1921, some fascists attacked the representatives of the Yugoslav National Council (*Narodno Vijeće*) in Zadar, one of the institutions of the neighboring state not officially recognized under the terms of the Treaty of Rapallo. A few days earlier, a column in *L'Adriatico* had already threatened an action complaining about the existence of this institution, and arguing that the only acceptable representation of the Kingdom SHS in Zadar was its consulate.

*To show respect toward foreigners is fine, but when these break the most basic rules of hospitality, or even conspire against us clandestinely (...) it is not. We neither want nor can tolerate their presence in Zadar. May the Royal Government care for pushing them out of the Italian soil before the population, which is justly resentful, handles it on its own.*⁵

Here, the motives highlighted in the first quotation reappear. The ambiguity of the subject between a first-person plural and an undefined “population”, the warning addressed to the Italian authorities turning into a threat for individuals deemed hostile to Italy, the fear of their conspiracy. In August, three members of the National Council mentioned in the article were beaten up by fascists in Zadar, and this episode represents an important moment in the negotiation of the boundaries of tolerated violence. In fact, the local section of the *Fascio* officially denied its involvement, whereas the Yugoslav newspaper in Split *Novo Doba* clearly pointed to Fascists as executioners of this act:

*It has also been ascertained that fascists waited for our persons [naša ljude, sic!] outside the National Council, they followed the group of Dr. Metličić, they attacked it from the back [...]. First they beat up Prof. Ježina, then Dr. Metličić, and lastly the Engineer Gasperini. While some of them beat them, others held a charged revolver in their hand. We have been informed that during the fascist meeting on August 8, it had been decided to beat up our best persons in Zadar.*⁶

5 *L'Adriatico*, 27. 7. 1921: Zara o Zadar? R.Governo o Narodno Vijeće?

6 *Novo Doba*, 18. 8. 1921: Još o napadaju na našeg namjesnika. Stjepan Metličić was the president of the local Narodno Vijeće, Marko Ježina was a professor at the Croatian gymnasium.

The *Corriere di Zara*, a newspaper close to the political elite of the town, mildly condemned this attack on important and respectful personalities,⁷ while a letter co-signed by many local citizens went as far as denouncing the passivity or even complicity of the Italian police and army in regard to fascist violence (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 51, f. 7/5, 10. 8. 1921). Compared to other settings, the fact that fascists did not claim the leading role in this attack to impose their presence as a political entity might appear striking. However, they were anyways recognized as those behind this initiative by other observers, and even by the authorities (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 51, f. 7/5, 9. 8. 1921). Thus, fascists managed to emerge as the most radical faction in local politics.

On the other hand, this also affected the trajectory of fascism in a negative way. The problem of using violence against Croats and Serbs appeared on different levels. First of all, the attack provoked a retaliation in Šibenik against one of the prominent figures of fascism in Zadar, Trifone Radovani.⁸ Secondly, it proved to be ineffective as a way to mobilize the local population more broadly. Thirdly, this happened a few weeks after the formation of the government led by Ivanoe Bonomi, who pushed for a “national pacification” between socialists and fascists aimed at hampering the use of violence on both sides. In this framework, fascists in Zadar could not count on strong support from fascist central structures, since these were as well undergoing a troublesome redefinition of their strategy.

TOWARD DISCIPLINE?

During 1921, Mussolini came to the decision to “discipline” the movement. His aim, however, was to neutralize internal factions and consolidate his control rather than extirpate the *squadracce*’s violent actions. In fact, these latter continued to play an important role in the self-representation and the praxis of fascism, and episodes of violence continued, although with other modalities (Millan, 2014) throughout Italy, including Zadar. However, this change also projected fascism in the political field as a more institutionalized entity, above all through its transformation into a proper party, the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF) in November 1921.

In Zadar, this went hand in hand with a discourse on “discipline”, which resonated in the newspapers reporting on political meetings. Already in late August 1921, a few days after the attack on the members of the *Narodno Vijeće*, *L’Adriatico* published a statement of the local *Fascio di Combattimento* calling for the discipline of his members as the only means which could “lead to ultimate victory”.⁹ The fascists in Zadar adapted to the “pacification” in Italy, although they declared to be ready to attack the enemy whenever it happened to break the terms of the truce. Moreover, local fascists became aware of the need for intensifying the cooperation with sections of the *Fascio* in other towns at the Eastern Border as well as with central institutions. This resulted in a greater organizational capacity but also in an increased dependency on decisions taken in Rome.

7 *Corriere di Zara*, 9. 8. 1921: Spiacevole incidente.

8 *Corriere di Zara*, 24. 8. 1921: Aggressione.

9 *L’Adriatico*, 24. 8. 1921: Assemblea del Fascio di Combattimento.

The way to the creation of a local section of the PNF also led to efforts to redefine the political profile vis-à-vis other factions in Zadar, mostly nationalists and republicans. The former entered a symbiosis with the fascists, and although they had an own political section, several activists operated in both groups simultaneously. The twist in the relationship between fascists and republicans went in the opposite direction, and their divergence evolved to a large extent in regard to political violence. Already during the opening ceremony of the local section of the *Partito Repubblicano Italiano della Dalmazia* (PRID) in January 1921, its members distanced themselves from “the seeds of violent turmoil of dubious origin” (DAZD, ERCO, 353, 26, 326, undated), a statement through which the fascists were implicitly accused of deviance from the original common spirit of the *legionari*. Thus, in spite of the rhetoric on discipline, violence became once again the factor which redefined the relationship between the two factions.

During the national convention of the *Fasci di combattimento* in Rome ending with the creation of the PNF in November 1921, fascists in Zadar attacked and destroyed the republicans’ headquarters, the *Circolo Giuseppe Mazzini*. This episode of political violence allegedly originated from a brawl in a café between republicans and Italian soldiers. Annoyed by this altercation perceived as a subversive provocation, a group of fascists intervened the day after and stormed the *Circolo* (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 55, 7. 11. 1921). Interestingly, the authorities shared the concerns about the republicans in Zadar, who gathered to chant “subversive anthems” (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 55, 21. 11. 1921) and shout slogans like “Down with the King, Long live the Republic!”.

The new civil commissary Moroni ordered to shut down both the republican and the fascist associations in the aftermath of these incidents. This intervention was a fatal blow for the capacity of the local republicans to organize, since the *Circolo* was the only institution of the faction in town. At first, the republicans attempted to re-conciliate with the fascists. They condemned the brutality of fascist violence and called for ending it in the name of the common goal of preserving Italy’s interests in Dalmatia.¹⁰ Soon afterwards, however, the republicans recognized that a convergence was not viable, and they changed their rhetoric becoming closer to socialism. For this reason, they were marginalized by the ruling elite, which at the same time sided more and more with the fascists. This became manifest most notably through the local press. While the republicans managed to gain control of *L’Adriatico*, formerly jointly edited with fascists, the conservative *Corriere di Zara* became less and less critical towards fascists, sometimes even explicitly supporting their activities.

The events of November 1921 are exemplar for the role played by violence in the redefinition of the balance of power in the local political field. Although the episode itself did not cause casualties and was confined to a small number of individuals, it represented an irreversible fracture between two previously proximate political forces. This rupture was provoked at the same time by an act of violence against the public order (the brawl between fascists and republicans), and by a repressive measure of the local authorities, which was meant to preserve this order. Interestingly, the outcome was the marginaliza-

¹⁰ L’Adriatico, 8. 11. 1921: Lotta fraterna.

tion of the common enemy, the PRID, and a convergence of interests among fascists, the conservative elite, and the representatives of the state.

The chain of events also shows that violence was not a gender-neutral phenomenon. It was, rather, almost exclusively employed by men against other men in situations in which masculinity was at stake.¹¹ Thus, the original brawl between the republican and the soldier originated from notions of honor, in a typical escalation for paying back an offense, but it did not have serious consequences for those involved. By their intervention on the following day, however, the fascists added a higher level and a new modality of violence by directly attacking, in a much greater number and with a better equipment, the enemy to settle the issue once and for all. In other words, to defend a man's own honor and to defend the honor of the *Patria* in a post-imperial territory increasingly adhered. Whereas the soldiers did not fulfill this double role in front of a subversive insult, the *squadraccia* proved that a violent assault was an effective reaction to such a provocation.

THE SMOOTH PATH TOWARD THE SEIZURE OF POWER

After the shift from an alliance with irredentist republicans to one with monarchist nationalists, fascism in Zadar evolved along a more synchronous trajectory in regard to central party structures in Italy. All factions in the Dalmatian town were, however, convinced of the crucial role of local politics for the broader question of stable relationships between Italy and the Kingdom SHS. Political disputes and conflicts were seen as extremely dangerous by Francesco Salata, the President of the *Ufficio Centrale per le Nuove Provincie* (Central Bureau of the New Provinces, UCNP) a body responsible for the integration of the newly acquired territories in the Italian administration. At the national level, Salata was accused by fascists of having a pro-Germans and pro-Slavs attitude. He was himself a victim of fascist violence in 1922 (Riccardi, 2001, 299), and the March on Rome marked the end of his political trajectory.

In Zadar, Salata relied on the old Italian Dalmatian autonomist and conservative political elite to steer the transition from Habsburg to Italian administration, although this elite was undergoing a troublesome phase as well. The list of the *Unione Nazionale* could again obtain the majority in the municipal elections of January 1922, while the list of the PNF and the Nationalists received half of the *Unione's* votes, ahead of the Republicans (*Corriere di Zara*, 24. 1. 1922). This victory, however, did not represent a sign of demarcation in regard to fascism. On the contrary, the *Corriere di Zara* published some articles in the aftermath of the election in which proximity to the far-right party was explicitly claimed. In the eyes of the conservative newspaper, the fascists had made a mistake by not accepting an alliance with the *Unione*, and they had not realized that the population of Zadar was:

11 Here a qualification is needed. Whereas this article highlights the nexus between masculinity and violence, the local PNF also had a women section since its foundation. Therefore, fascism in Zadar was not merely a men's affair. Rather, the role played by women was marginalized in the rhetoric and actions of violence leading to the redefinition of institutional politics.

*proud to have been fascist before fascism was born, because when defeatism committed its crimes in many Italian cities, no Bolshevik in Zadar would have burnt the Tricolore without being lynched.*¹²

Once again, violence (lynching) is evoked as the junction of fascism and patriotism against an enemy (this time identified with communism) which, in fact, never used violence against those who made its apology. This commentary is an explicit marker of the shift in the local conservative elite, which now openly flirted with fascism. In February 1922, a few weeks after the administrative elections, the leader of the *Unione Luigi Ziliotto*, who had just been reelected in its long-time function as mayor of Zadar, died and left a considerable vacuum of power and charisma, since he could count on almost unanimous respect. This also meant that fascists could further increase their visibility in the public sphere and their relevance in local politics as a force on the rise. Their acts of violence decreased in intensity, but increased in their acceptance, at least in the press and among local politicians. The Italian state authorities were contented with the absence of violence against citizens or institutions of the neighboring Kingdom SHS, and did not oppose this convergence toward fascism that, actually, reinforced them.

This trajectory is remarkably different from the one in Fiume, where fascists seized power through a local *Putsch* in March 1922 (Cattaruzza 2007, 165–166). In Zadar, fascists continued to represent a faction ready to use violence, without aspiring to subvert the status quo in the political field. In spring 1922, a group of them almost had a fight with some Italian soldiers, whom they accused of being “traitors”, referring to the still ongoing evacuation of troops from the third occupation zone according to the Treaty of Rapallo. The brawl was avoided only through a last minute mediation by an officer, and the civil governor even sided with the fascists. He reported to Rome that they had been “provoked” by the soldiers who booed at them as they passed by the barracks singing “patriotic songs” (ACS, MI, PS 1922, b. 162, f. 1, 3. 4. 1922).

In fact, these fascists were returning from an “excursion” to the suburb of Stani. Before meeting the soldiers, they spread terror in the neighborhood Voštarnica (Ceraria). Their use of violence followed the usual pattern, as condemned by the now pro-republican *L'Adriatico*: Insults, threats with revolvers, beating, humiliations, vandalism against houses. The newspaper also accused the authorities and the police to grant the fascists impunity for these violent actions against republicans, and also highlighted that the victims could claim to be more patriotic than them.¹³

The violence-masculinity complex of fascism re-emerged in a statement published by the local PNF which directly attacked Emilio Erco, the author of the *Adriatico* article quoted above. In the statement, Erco was insulted as “*omuncolo*” (homunculus), “*vigliacco*” (coward), “*figura losca e intrigante*” (suspicious and seditious character) (DAZD, ERCO, 353, 26, 7. 4. 1922). The gap between the “new” praxis of fascist violence and an “old” one is symbolically represented by Erco’s reaction. Feeling offended in his honor

12 Corriere di Zara, 26. 1 1922: Tutti per Zara, nessuno per sè stesso.

13 L'Adriatico, 4. 4. 1922: Gite avventurose di primavera.

by the PNF's statement, Erco challenged the already mentioned Trifone Radovani in a private duel (DAZD, ERCO, 353, 26, 20. 4. 1922). On the contrary, fascism did not require any chivalry code nor an intimate space to settle these issues. As the threatening articles quoted above show, violence could be even anticipated by a public statement, after which a brutal physical group attack in the public space did not leave any room for conciliation.

A quite different interpretation emerged in an article published by the Split based *Novo Doba* a few days after the incidents in Voštarnica, in which the victims of fascist violence were described as *naši* (ours, "Yugoslavs").¹⁴ The fact that both republicans and Yugoslavs claimed to be the victims of the attack is not a paradox. Situated outside the walled city and next to the harbor, the neighborhood was inhabited by both people identifying as Italians and as Croats, and being from the lower classes made many sympathetic for the republicans. Therefore, the categories of belonging of those targeted by fascist violence were fluid and contingent, and most of all interpreted through a retrospective description of the facts. Whereas it is clear that episodes of violence involving male actors were the most common pattern, fascism continuously played on the ambiguity between the "inner enemy" (mostly the republicans) and "outer enemy" (the Serbs and Croats) in order to demarcate the normative national body to be established in Zadar.

When the Italian government was informed about these incidents, it expressed concerns about a possible diplomatic crisis with the Kingdom SHS. Radovani did not hesitate to deny any clash between fascists and citizens of the neighboring state on behalf of the PNF, stressing that the episode of violence occurred against republicans only.¹⁵ Even before this potentially embarrassing situation, the authorities did not change their favorable attitude toward local fascists. As an example, one could mention that one of the leaders, Maurizio Mandel, who militated both in the PNF and in the Nationalist Party, was among the few politicians officially received by the King of Italy Vittorio Emanuele III when he visited Zadar in May 1922.¹⁶

Mandel's trajectory can be useful to summarize how fascists managed to increase their symbolic capital by navigating in the ambiguity of tolerated and illicit violence across time. Born in Cattaro in 1888 from a petit-bourgeoise family, Mandel grew up in Zadar and started his studies in Vienna. In the Habsburg capital, he took part in the clashes between Italian and German students during the debates on the opening of an Italian university in Trieste in 1908. Arrested by the police for firing from a revolver (OeStA, AVA Justiz OLG Wien 6, 6D, VZ 5, 22. 2. 1909), he proudly claimed the use of violence for patriotic demonstrations which at the same constructed the masculine model of the "*goliardo irredento*" (irredentist student-rascal). This term appeared in the title of an article written by Mandel twenty years after those events with the clear intent to construct a pre-history of fascist political activism (Mandel, 1928). After the clashes, Mandel was banned by Habsburg universities and continued his studies in Medicine in Italy, where

14 *Novo Doba*, 10. 4. 1922: Osvete Fašista.

15 *L'Adriatico*, 16. 5. 1922: La politica del Fascio di Zara.

16 *Corriere di Zara*, 31. 5. 1922: Ancora della visita a Zara delle Loro Maestà.

he further radicalized within irredentist circles. He later took part in World War I as a volunteer doctor in the Italian army, while his family was put under strict surveillance by the Austrian authorities (DAZD, CIV KOM, 118, 40, 4, 16. 9. 1915). After the Italian occupation of Zadar in 1918, he returned there and became active in the local *legionari* (AV, GEN ZARA, 22. 4. 1921). Interestingly, Mandel never appears as involved in first person in episodes of fascist violence in the Dalmatian town. He is therefore a perfect example of how local fascists managed to combine violence and respectability until they reached a favorable position in the balance of power not only vis-à-vis the other political factions, but also the very state authorities.

Through this process, compared to many other Italian localities, the last months before the March on Rome were not marked by a confrontation between the local government and fascists in Zadar. While, for example, blackshirts overthrew the municipal council of Bolzano in early October 1922, the symbiosis between the ruling political elite, the civil governor, the police and the fascists continued and actually facilitated the *Gleichschaltung*, the cooptation of most public institutions after the seizure of power. Not surprisingly, then, the civil commissary Moroni could report to the capital on October 28 that, during the March on Rome, fascist in Zadar simply held a meeting with “no actions”, while the day in Zadar passed “normally” (ACS, MI, PS NP, b. 52, f. 7/5, 28. 10. 1922).

CONCLUSIONS

Fascist violence in post-Habsburg Zadar served two main purposes: To redefine the political landscape and to accentuate the gendered dimension of politics. A close reading of actions observable in this post-war setting can, indeed, create a link with the contemporary evolution of the notion of violence in philosophy and sociology since, in the same years as the events described above, major thinkers such as Max Weber and Walter Benjamin thoroughly reflected on it. It is well known that, in German, the word usually employed for translating violence, *Gewalt*, has a quite ambiguous meaning, that also signifies “authority” (Derrida, 1994, 19; Balibar, 2009). This is not only a semantic issue, but one historically rooted in the production of an intellectual discourse. These authors were confronted with a political landscape in post-WWI Germany in which the legitimacy of state institutions was challenged through paramilitary violence, and their reflections are therefore significant and useful for understanding Italian fascism as well. Weber formulated the notorious argument according to which, *Gewalt* is “specific” to the notion of the State as “the human community which [...] aspires (with success) to the monopoly of legitimate physical force/violence [*Gewaltsamkeit*]” (Weber, 1919, 4). For Benjamin, *Gewalt* is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of a changing balance of power. By dissociating violence from its ends and analyzing it as a means, he therefore distinguishes between “*rechtserhaltende Gewalt*”, that is one aiming at conserving the existing institutional social order, and “*rechtssetzende Gewalt*”, that this one mobilized to challenge and question this order (Benjamin, 1999 [1921], 188).

The analysis of fascist violence in Zadar emerges with features that can be situated at the crossroad of these interpretations in regard to both “state” and “right”. Local fascism

was not revolutionary since it never sought a conflict with those in power, but it used violence to gain its own legitimacy. Although the modalities of the *squadracce*'s assaults bear many similarities with metropolitan settings, Zadar represents a peculiarity in the sense that neither "state" nor "right" were properly present at the moment when fascism appeared. This was a consequence, on the one hand, of the shift in the rationale of governance from Habsburg Empire to Italian Nation-State. On the other hand, the ambiguity of "right" derived from the continuity of a state of emergency in terms of military authority during and after World War I.

In a way, then, fascism was both a factor of state-building and a factor of right-building. It became a force that efficiently claimed to defend the legitimacy of the Italian rule in Zadar. Therefore, it actually helped the establishment of a monopoly of violence of the new ruling state. Fascist activism was located in the gap between a local conservative elite not used to employing violence, and Italian military sent from the center who did not embody an "autochthonous" Italianness. Its success laid in constructing its legitimacy within this gap by skillfully combining symbiosis and autonomy vis-à-vis those two entities. In terms of right-building, fascism implemented in a conservative fashion the narrative of the Nation's exclusive right on a territory, along which the negotiations at Rapallo were conducted. After a brief moment of disorientation, fascism quickly accepted the borders drawn in the Treaty, and at the same time it acted to ensure that only Italian and only pro-monarchy political entities have a legitimacy in this new territory. Violence, then, was the means used to marginalize the non-Italian population as well as the former allies, the republicans, who claimed other issues such as class conflict in their own doctrine of nationalism. In so doing, fascism continued under a regime of civil administration (after 1920) what the former military governor Millo had started at the very arrival of Italian troops. In other words, it was the force who managed to steer the potentially conflicting para-military and military, subversive and repressive, pro-local and pro-national types of *Gewalt* into a convergence which eventually resulted in its own seizure of power.

A close reading of the episodes of violence has shown that such process went hand in hand with a shift in the gendered dimension of politics, which was conceived of as the domain of a new ideal-type of male activist. Both the praxis of fascist violence and the rhetoric acts that represented it revolved around the idea that, in order to be considered legitimate, the male politician must have experience of violence, readiness to use it, and words to translate acts of brutality into political language. Considering the first aspect, the individual trajectory during World War I, the Fiume enterprise and even previous events related to irredentism were central for a respectable political "curriculum" in the eyes of fascists. These experiences were valued as symbolic capital only in their masculine dimension, that is the in terms of fighting in the army, enrolling in D'Annunzio's *legionari*, etc. The role played by women or other men not adhering to this ideal, or the way in which they were affected by these events, were deprived of any importance in the self-representation of fascism in this phase. Secondly, fascist masculine violence was mostly practiced against other men. Many male political figures or representatives of categories deemed "unwelcome" were silenced or marginalized after being victims of fascist attacks. No such group storms happened against fascism in Zadar, meaning that it

was the only political faction effectively acting through violence. However, “readiness” implied that threats of violence were often enough for fascists to gain the overhand, as Count Borelli’s withdrawal shows. Physical violence occurred, but it was only one of the modalities through which the fascists imposed a new climate of intimidation in the public sphere.

When targeted singularly, these opponents, including the republican Emilio Erco, were aware that their “honor” was at stake, but they were not ready to respond to these attack on the fascists’ own ground. Thus, they either appealed to the authorities, or responded with articles, or with duels, all ways of settling issues becoming increasingly ineffective in terms of social capital and political legitimacy. Lastly, fascist violence relied on the capacity to transform brutal acts into language of masculine values such as vigor, dynamism, audacity. They were highlighted as bonds of loyalty to other leaders praised for their masculinity, first D’Annunzio and then Mussolini, by at the same time constructing a feminized ideal needing to be rescued and protected, such as the *Madrepatria*, the *Nazione*, or *Italia* tout-court.

Implanting a new rationale of sovereignty into an Habsburg setting implied redrawing a political field and negotiating social order. Without winning on the electoral front, fascism in Zadar eventually reached a quite favorable position in the balance of power by provoking a new convergence between violence as display of patriotism and violence as a display of masculinity.

FAŠISTIČNO NASILJE V ZADRU PRED POHODOM NA RIM. AVTORITETA IN MOŠKOST V NEKEM POST-IMPERIALNEM OKOLJU

Andreas GUIDI

École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 54 Boulevard Raspail, 75006 Paris, Francija

e-mail: andreasguidi@gmail.com

POVZETEK

Članek obravnava vlogo političnega nasilja pri nastanku fašizma v Zadru. Dalmatinsko mesto je bilo ločeno od svojega zaledja kot posledica rapalske pogodbe, ki sta jo novembra 1920 podpisali Italija in Kraljevina SHS. Mesece pred in po tem diplomatskem sporazumu so ga zaznamovale politične napetosti. Pokrajina je postala italijanska, saj lokalnih Srbov in Hrvatov ni zastopala nobena stranka, medtem ko so stare italijanske elite izpodbijale nove sile. V tem post-imperialnem multietničnem okolju je fašizem izhajal iz heterogene skupine aktivistov. Nasilje je predstavljalo glavni vektor, s katerim se je fašizem profiliral v odnosu do drugih političnih elementov, saj je bilo prisotno tako v diskurzu kot tudi konkretnih dejanjih, katerih cilj je bilo ustrahovanje nasprotnikov. Poleg tega je bilo nasilje pogosto prikazano kot soodvisno od pojma moškosti. Nov jezik in nova oblika političnega vedenja sta tako bila uporabljena, da bi podeljevali legitimnost fašističnemu moškemu politiku ter diskreditirali ideje drugih in odnose v političnem življenju. Povezava nasilja in moškosti po prvi svetovni vojni je služila kot način za diskreditacijo stare politične elite, za zanikanje kakršnekoli možnosti, da bi bili ne-Italijani del političnega telesa, in – ne nazadnje –, da bi postavili jasno ločnico med fašisti in staro Republikansko stranko; v prvih povojnih letih jih je namreč družila skupna pripadnost D'Annunzijevemu aktivizmu. Poleg tega je nasilje sčasoma spremenilo ravnotežje moči glede razmerja do državnih organov in lokalne elite. Oba elementa v praksi nista ovirala fašističnega nasilja ter sta – vzporedno z močnim vzponom fašizma na nacionalni ravni – končno pristala na njegovo večjo prepoznavnost v javnosti. Konvergenca med konzervativno elito in fašizmom v Zadru je tako predvidela in olajšala prevzem oblasti po pohodu na Rim oktobra 1922. Članek s pomočjo arhivskega gradiva in lokalnega tiska natančno obravnava epizode fašističnega nasilja ter dokazuje, da je bilo nasilje fleksibilno orodje, ki je bilo v raznih momentih usmerjeno proti različnim nasprotnikom, in da je uporaba nasilja potekala na robu sprejemljivega. Fašistično nasilje je imelo tudi svoje meje, poskuse discipliniranja pa je treba razumeti kot prizadevanja za postopno napredovanje legitimnosti fašističnega gibanja. V Zadru sta nova semantika in praksa nasilja ustvarila vse večjo konvergenco med imaginarijem moške časti in imaginarijem nove nacionalne italijanske suverenosti v Zadru, s čimer sta odigrali osrednjo vlogo v post-habsburški transformaciji iz imperialnega provincialnega središča v »odrešeno« mesto, simbolično pomembno, a dejansko marginalno področje fašistične Italije.

Ključne besede: nasilje, fašizem, Zadar, Dalmacija, moškost, politika

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