

BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED BY THE ARSA COMPANY IN CARPANO

BUDOVY POSTAVENÉ SPOLOČNOSŤOU ARSA V CARPANE

Source Zdroj: Arsa, Società Anonima Carbonifera, Trieste: Editoriale Libraria, 1935

Re-Reading the Story of Arsia/Raša: from the New Town of the 1930s to the (Post)Socialist Present

Opätovné čítanie príbehu mesta Arsia/Raša: od nového mesta 30. rokov 20. storočia po (post)socialistickú súčasnosť

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Príspevok skúma banícke mesto Arsia (1937) ako prípadovú štúdiu urbanistickej koncepcie a mnohorakých rolí architektúry v kontexte rôznych politických postupov a sociálnych politík. S cieľom zasadiť programy výstavby do historickej a komparatívnej perspektívy sa zameriava na vzťahy medzi aktérmi a nositeľmi politického a kultúrneho kontextu, pričom venuje osobitnú pozornosť prenosom architektonickej kultúry. Priestorové kapacity sú v rámci týchto vzťahov analyzované ako nástroj a prostriedok dominantných politík, od diskusie medzi modernou a tradicionalizmom, cez (dis)kontinuitu programových princípov stretnutí CIAM v období tridsiatych rokov až po postsocialistickú transformáciu po roku 1990. Vychádzajúc z architektonickej typológie nových talianskych miest (Città di Fondazione) článok skúma štandardy sociálneho bývania a symbolické hodnoty príslušných verejných priestorov a porovnáva ich so súdobými príkladmi (Baťa, Pozzo Littorio). Porovnanie Arsie so súdobým príkladom priemyselného osídlenia postaveného začiatkom tridsiatych rokov pre robotníkov Baťových závodov v Borove pri Vukovare (v dnešnom Chorvátsku), kde prebehla systematická kontextuálna analýza socioekonomických, kultúrno-historických a politických aspektov urbanistického a architektonického dedičstva, potvrdzuje, že v prípade Arsie, na rozdiel od Baťovho osídlenia, bola "identifikácia" s talianskym fašistickým režimom konfliktným faktorom vo vnímaní a hodnotení historickej identity. Hoci Baťovo robotnícke osídlenie bolo po roku 1945 úspešnejšie integrované do plánovaného hospodárstva socialistickej spoločnosti, v deväťdesiatych rokoch 20. storočia bola v oboch prípadoch pozastavená výroba, čo následne viedlo k devastácii osídlení. To vyvoláva otázku: Existuje špecifický politický obsah, ktorý naďalej určuje naše chápanie architektúry v rôznych ideologických súvislostiach?

Dedičstvo talianskeho modernizmu, ktoré charakterizovali progresívne architektonické postupy v službách autoritatívneho politického režimu, sa v politických a ideologických podmienkach socializmu stotožňovalo s politikou fašistického totalitného režimu a stalo sa súčasťou "zabudnutých", spletitých a ignorovaných dejín architektúry na základe naratívu národného (chorvátskeho) konštruktu. Nedávny záujem historiografie architektúry o produkciu označovanú ako Taliansky racionalizmus sa v prvom desaťročí 21. storočia sústredil na formálne charakteristiky typológie, dejiny architektúry a urbanizmu. Arsia ako jeden z paradigmatických príkladov diskurzu je zároveň

začlenená do "iného" historického naratívu città di fondazione, kde sa urbanistickým a architektonickým konceptom pripisujú rôzne ideologické obsahy, od neofašistickej propagandy až po štúdie zamerané na politické dejiny. Doteraz sa však uskutočnilo len málo humanitných a spoločenskovedných výskumov ideologických a spoločenských rolí mestských a polyfunkčných komplexov postavených v (dnešnom) Chorvátsku v priebehu 20. storočia. Konceptuálny význam Arsie sa však neobmedzuje len na zámerné pôsobenie vládnej politiky talianskeho štátu, ale zvyšuje aj povedomie o účinnosti systematickej implementácie kultúrnej identity prostredníctvom reprezentatívneho diskurzu vládnucej ideológie.

Arsia, navrhnutá podľa najvyšších štandardov architektonického a urbanistického plánovania, je postavená podľa modelu "ideálneho mesta" koncipovaného ako moderné záhradné mesto pre 6-tisícovú populáciu. Cieľom výstavby "prvého mesta sebestačného štátu", ako bola Arsia propagovaná po svojom dokončení v novembri 1937, bolo vytvoriť podmienky na život v bezprostrednej blízkosti bane. Nové banské mesto Arsia navrhol Gustavo Pulitzer Finali (1887 – 1967), architekt, ktorý patril do Terstského kultúrneho okruhu prepájajúceho stredomorskú a stredoeurópsku mnohotvárnu kultúrnu identitu. V okruhu Pulitzerových spolupracovníkov v Studio Stuard, kam patrili okrem iných Giorgio Lah, Franjo Kosovel a Henrik Ukmar, je zrejmé priame napojenie na medzinárodné avantgardné tendencie.

Základný pôdorys pretiahnutej obdĺžnikovej mriežky kopíruje tvar údolia s verejným priestorom v centre mesta, ktorý je prepojený s jednotlivými funkčnými celkami. Urbanistická koncepcia je založená na dvojitom programe: striktnom členení na funkčné celky prepojené verejným priestorom. Keďže verejný priestor centra mesta mal mať súdržný, symbolický charakter, práve tu sa najvýraznejšie prejavuje politické kódovanie atmosféry mesta a jej performatívny potenciál, ktorý po roku 1945 prevzal v socialistickom režime analogické úlohy v reprezentácii opačnej ideológie. Hlavné námestie mesta sa stáva miestom všetkých politických zhromaždení a spoločenských udalostí, stretnutí a zjazdov. Integračný charakter námestia je ďalej posilnený koncepciou priestoru vymedzeného uzavretým obvodom s asymetricky komponovanými sochárskymi akcentmi. Modely, nákresy a štúdie, ktoré dokumentujú zmeny v procese vytvárania realizačného plánu, ako aj projekty jednotlivých budov, svedčia v prospech princípov návrhu. Najväčšia pozornosť bola

A&U 3-4/2022 197 venovaná centru mesta ako "sociálnemu kondenzátoru", javisku sociálnej interakcie obyvateľov mesta, medzi ktorými inde panoval odstup. Preto boli hlavné námestia nových talianskych miest navrhnuté ako kulisy daného ideového kontextu. Kostol je umiestnený v rohu námestia na vyvýšenine, ktorá svojou výškou konkuruje úrovni balkóna budovy Dopolavoro (Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro). Kľúčová spoločenská a politická rola stavby je zdôraznená expresivitou architektonického jazyka. Na prízemí sa nachádzalo komunitné centrum, divadelná a filmová sála s kapacitou 400 miest na sedenie, mäsiarstvo a suterénny bar s dvorom na hranie petangu. Vedľa sa nachádzala budova politickej strany (Casa del Fascio) s balkónom na politické prejavy, zatiaľ čo v prízemí boli obchody. Pod balkónom stála socha nahého baníka v podobe bojovníka, dielo terstského sochára Marcella Mascheriniho. Sochy a súsošia, z ktorých väčšina bola po roku 1945 odstránená a zničená, mali dôležitú úlohu vo formovaní vizuálneho charakteru priestoru, v ktorom štát v úlohe patróna veľmi jasne určoval ideologický rámec. Po roku 1945 sa uhoľné bane stali dôležitým zdrojom v povojnovej obnove socialistického štátu. Arsia/Raša, vnímaná ako jeden z pozostatkov totalitného fašistického režimu, prešla radikálnou premenou. Väčšina talianskeho obyvateľstva emigrovala a ťažba v bani postupne upadala, až skončila v roku 1991. Urbánny kontext, ktorý bol navrhnutý tak, aby sprostredkovával významy moci a politiky vo verejnom priestore, bol bez meškania odstránený. Verejné budovy súvisiace s ideológiou predchádzajúceho režimu zaznamenali drastické zmeny. Casa de fascio bola prerobená na novozaloženú

Ľudovú univerzitu. V období socializmu kultúrne centrum prevzalo úlohu *Dopolavoro*, t. j. centra spoločenského života, kde sa konali početné voľnočasové aktivity a ktoré zahrňovalo všetko od knižnice s čitárňou až po koncertnú sálu, divadlo a iné kultúrne programy. V dôsledku útlmu banskej činnosti väčšina administratívnych budov stratila svoj účel: z ústredia sa stala prevádzka továrne na hračky a hotel sa zmenil na zdravotné stredisko. Stagnácia Raše pokračovala aj po roku 1990 v období postsocialistickej transformácie, keď väčšina priemyselnej výroby skolabovala, čo viedlo k ďalšej devastácii opustených objektov a úpadku. Hlavným problémom však zostáva absencia komplexnej stratégie urbánnej regenerácie kultúrnej a historickej identity mesta. Príkladom úspešnej mestskej obnovy môže byť opätovné zhodnotenie bývalého banského komplexu v Labine, kde alternatívna kultúrna a umelecká scéna pamätajúc na priemyselné dedičstvo nachádza v opustených tuneloch a sieňach uhoľnej bane nové využitia. V rámci revitalizácie komplexu je vynikajúcim príkladom modernej interpretácie historického prostredia premena bývalej administratívnej budovy na mestskú knižnicu. Prípadová štúdia Arsia/Raša odhaľuje rozporuplné stratégie použité na redefinovanie jej identity: aktívne verejné zabúdanie na ideologizovanú minulosť z obdobia fašistického Talianska, socialistickej Juhoslávie a postsocialistickej transformácie. Nedávne iniciatívy propagujúce obraz mesta ako múzea majú sklony mestskú a architektonickú identitu komercializovať ako turistickú atrakciu. Otázka deideologizácie pamäti mesta ako východiskového bodu konceptualizácie súčasnosti je však stále otvorená.

Introduction

Long identified with the politics of the fascist totalitarian regime, especially under the political and ideological circumstances of socialism, the heritage of Italian modernism, characterised by progressive architectural practices in service of authoritarian politics, became a part of the "forgotten", complicated, or ignored architectural history based on the narrative of national (Croatian) self-construction. Recent interest in architectural historiography towards the built legacy denoted as Italian Rationalism¹, starting from around 2000, focused largely on the formal characteristics of typology, architectural and urban history.²

At the same time, Arsia³ as one of the paradigmatic examples of the discourse, has simultaneously been incorporated into the "other" historical narrative of the città di fondazione, where various ideological contents are attributed to urban and architectural concepts, from neo-fascist propaganda4 to studies focused on the details of political history5. However, there has been little humanities or social-science research to date into the ideological and social roles of urban and multifunctional complexes built in present-day Croatia during the 20th century. Nonetheless, the conceptual significance of Arsia is not limited to the intentional effect of the governmental policies of the Italian state, enhancing awareness of the effectiveness of the systematic implementation of cultural identity through the representative discourse of the ruling ideology. Since the writings published to date deal exclusively with individual specimens, thoroughgoing contextual research into the topic is still to come.7 And, apart from a few significant studies8, the architectural and urban heritage of the post-socialist transition has not been fully explored. The reason could be found in the socio-political structures determining the spatial change after the fall of state-socialism, while due to the ideologisation of the currently dominant historical perspective, it has been excluded from preservation and development agendas.9 Through a critical re-reading of the complexity and contradiction of the Arsia urban experiment, the article strives to define the multiple roles of architectural culture, and its potential in contemporary debate. Furthermore, it aims to open the question of the necessary (re)creation of cultural policies and spaces for cultural production, thus implying a learning from history.

The article examines the miners' town of Arsia (1937) as a case study of architecture's multiple roles in the context of public policies, as well as the creation of a modern urban built environment, focused on the aspects of social policies in architectural design, urban planning and environmental transformation. Aiming to place government building programs in historical and comparative perspective, my intent is to focus on the relations between actors and vehicles of political and cultural context, with special attention given to the transfers of architectural culture. Within these relations, spatial capacities are analysed as simultaneously an instrument and a medium for cultural policies, chronologically running from the debate between modernity and traditionalism, alongside the (dis)continuity of programmatic principles within CIAM¹o debates in the 1930s, up to the post-socialist transition after 1990. By taking the architectural typology of Italian new towns (Città di Fondazione) as a starting point, the aim is to analyse the transformations of the architectural ideas and qualities, or the symbolic values of public spaces in comparison with contemporary architecture (Bata, Pozzo Littorio).

A comparison of Arsia with a contemporary example of industrial settlement, e.g., the one built in the early 1930s for the workers of the Bat'a factory in Borovo near Vukovar (now Croatia), where a systematic contextual analysis of the socioeconomic, cultural-historical and political aspects of urban and architectural heritage has already been carried out¹¹, confirms that in the case of Arsia, unlike the settlement of Bata, the "identification" with the fascist Italian regime was a conflicting factor in the perception and evaluation of historical identity. Although the working-class settlement of Bata became integrated more successfully into the planned economy of the socialist society after 1945, in the 1990s production was suspended in both cases, which consequently resulted in their devastation.¹² This raises the question: is there a specific political content that continues to determine our understanding of architecture in different ideological contexts? The settlement of Bat'a was planned according to the model of Zlín13, built as a paradigmatic example of private entrepreneurship in urban planning, while the second example, like other "new towns" built during the fascist period, demonstrated the programmatic and cultural conditions of state propaganda. Both Bata and Arsia are examples of modern urban-architectural planning based on clearly separated zones: housing, industry and public amenities. However, while the concept of zoning in the Bat'a company's settlements is of a functional character, in Arsia the urban typology reflects the social structure of the inhabitants, generating neighbourhoods of differentiated identities and codifying segregation by social class, where villas for upper-class residents were separated from workers' housing. This question was recognised in architectural criticism of the 1930s. Francesco Fariello contextualised the new town of Arsia inside a range of international models; the English examples from Raymond Unwin's "garden city", Tony Garnier's "Industrial City", the Bata colony in Zlin, Eskil Sundhall's Forbundet colony near Stockholm, Väinö Vähäkallio's Kankopaa colony and Alvar Aalto's Kotka experiment.¹⁴ Gio' Ponti, the editor of *Domus* magazine, praised the concept of Arsia as a total work of art, from urban plan to furnishings: "Our readers must consider that the problem of housing and the house is such that the project had to be a 'total' urban design". Furthermore, the rational beauty of an architectural and environmental concept granted by the Fascist state to the miners of Arsia could serve as a model, for example, to the Milanese of the new suburbs.¹⁵

Historical Background

The development of mining in the Raša basin dates from the time of Venetian rule (early 15th to the end of the 18th century), but expanded most forcefully in the time under Austrian governance (1813-1918). The political conditions leading to Istria's 1918 annexation to Italy, and the sacking of miners as a result of mechanisation, resulted in a strike in 1921, culminating in the proclamation of the workers' Labin Republic. The rebellion was rapidly quenched in a bloodbath. In spite of the repression, cells of the Communist Party were soon formed in both mines, active until the coming of the Yugoslav Partisans. The mine in Arsia was bought by the *Società anonima carbonifera Arsa*, a company engaged in the extraction and sale of coal from the Istrian mines founded in 1919 in Trieste, headed by Guido Segre. Despite the crisis, during the 1920s, barracks and houses for workers were built near the Vinež and Karlota (Carpano) coal mines. In 1928, the company launched a programme to modernise the facilities, including the presentation of the plan of a new town (Arsia). The Italian government showed great interest in the Istrian mines because of industrial development and growth of the navy, both dependent on coal resources. The ever greater needs of industry, and the sanctions imposed by the League of Nations on Italy because of the war in Abyssinia resulted in

NEW STOCK EXCHANGE IN TRIESTE, INTERIOR OF THE TRADING ROOM, 1930 DESIGN: GUSTAVO PULITZER FINALI

NOVÁ BURZA CENNÝCH PAPIEROV V TERSTE, INTERIÉR BURZOVEJ SIENE, 1930, ARCHITEKTONICKÝ NÁVRH: GUSTAVO PULITZER FINALI

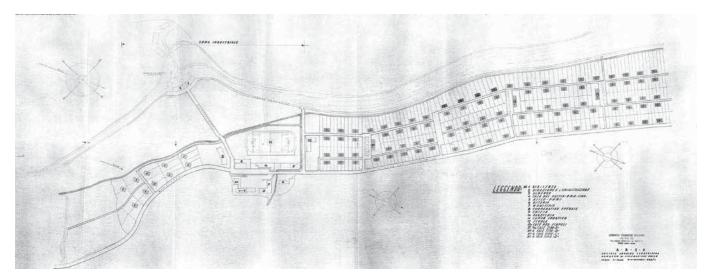
Source Zdroj: Gustavo Pulitzer Finali, Navi e case: architetture interne 1930 – 1935. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli editore



an increased pace of exploitation of the Arsia mine, the only source of coal in Italy of that time. Like many cities planned on the previously drained marshy areas, Arsia itself was built after the draining of Krapanj Lake in the dale of Krapanj Brook, making the land in effect a marsh. It was then turned into polder, and finally into cultivable land. Apart from the configuration of the river valley, the location of the new city was determined by the main regional road. Giuseppe Coboli Gigli, then the minister of public works, approved at the end of 1935, on the orders of Mussolini, a loan of five million lira for the construction, after which the company president of *Arsa*, Guido Segre, hired an architect. He was Gustavo Pulitzer Finali (1887 – 1967), with whom Segre shared not only affiliation to the Trieste cultural and intellectual circle, but also Jewish descent. The period of Pulitzer's oeuvre prior to 1935 is considered his most creative, though as an architect he was notably shaped by the interweaving of Mediterranean and Central European multifaceted cultural identities in his native Trieste, including his acquaintance with the protagonists of the futurist and constructivist avant-garde, Ugo Carà, Marcello Mascherini, Avgust Černigoj. Direct links with international avant-garde tendencies are evident in the circle of Pulitzer's collaborators at *Studio Stuard*, among others Giorgio Lah, Tranjo Kosovel and Henrik Ukmar.

The Urban Concept as Context

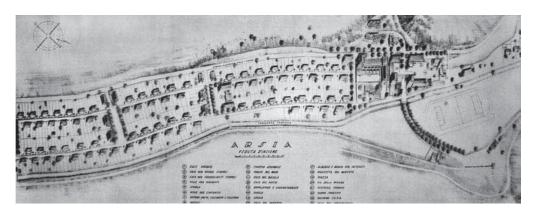
The planimetric basis of the elongated rectangular grid follows the configuration of the valley, with a clear division into the city centre following key public facilities, connected to individual functional units. The urban concept is based on a dualistic program: strict division into functional units, interconnected by a public space. Since the urban form was supposed to acquire a cohesive, powerful symbolic character, it is precisely in the public space of the city centre that the political coding of the ambience and its performative potential are most explicitly manifested; ironically, after 1945 under a socialist order, assuming analogous roles in representing the opposite ideology. Again,



FIRST VERSION OF THE URBAN PLAN DESIGNED BY GUSTAVO PULITZER; VARIANT WITH HOUSING FOR CLERKS, MANAGERS AND DIRECTORS TO THE LEFT, AND WORKER'S HOUSING COMPLEX TO THE RIGHT OF THE TOWN CENTRE

PRVÁ VERZIA URBANISTICKÉHO PLÁNU GUSTAVA PULITZERA; VARIANT S OBYTNÝMI DOMAMI PRE ÚRADNÍKOV, MANAŽÉROV A RIADITEĽOV VĽAVO A BYTOVKAMI PRE ROBOTNÍKOV VPRAVO OD CENTRA

Source Zdroj: Progetto di sistemazione edile), 232/1, 1935, HR-DAPA-649 ISTARSKI UGLJENOKOPI RAŠA 1870/1945 [1946/1949] box 29. State Archives, Pazin



AXONOMETRY OF ARSIA, 1937

AXONOMETRIA ARSIE, 1937

Source Zdroj: Arsia, il villagio per il minatori della S.A. Carbonifera Arsa, Trieste: Editrice Libraria, 1937



VIEW OF THE URBAN CENTRE TOWARD PIAZZA DEL IMPERO

POHĽAD NA CENTRUM MESTA SMEROM K PIAZZA DEL IMPERO

Source Zdroj: Le opere del'Regime in Istria nel quinquenio 1933 – 1937. Pola: Editore F. Rocco, 1938

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the main square becomes the venue for all political gatherings and social meetings. The integrative character of the square is further strengthened by its concept of a space defined by a closed perimeter, with asymmetrically composed sculptural accents. Models, drawings and studies that document the changes in the process of creation of the execution plan as well as the projects of individual buildings testify in support of the principles of design.

Designed to match the highest standards of architectural and urban design, Arsia was planned as a modern garden city for a population of 6000. The objective of constructing "the first town of Autarky"26 was to enable optimal living conditions directly beside the mine, including numerous amenities planned for the leisure time the workers now would have, otherwise spent travelling to and from work. Thus, the greatest attention was devoted to the urban centre, the identity of which was mediated through the complexity of several multifunctional buildings for public use. The main square was conceived as a blend of a large Piazza dell Impero and a small Piazzeta del Mercato, connected with a "triumphal" gate reminiscent of Roman imperial architecture. All the same, the concept of the city's centre registers a shift from the ideological paradigm of shaping public spaces as stage settings for the given context of politics of public space. Such an approach is not at all accidental, since the fields of naval design, exhibition architecture and interior design are vital feature of Pulitzer's oeuvre.²⁷ Further, Pulitzer drew inspiration from the vernacular forms of traditional architecture, such as the ballatoio loggias²⁸ on the houses that he transferred into the iconic language of contemporary architecture. The synthesis of traditional²⁹ and modern is also evident in materials, technologies and construction methods. Echoes of the Renaissance tradition are to be seen in the irregular facades of the open city space bounded by porticoes, often evoking De Chirico's and Sironi's metaphysical paintings. Yet even so, they are equally derived from the local traditional building practice.³⁰ The dual sources of inspiration are manifested in the volumetric design of the church,31 derived from the reinforced concrete construction of a series of parabolic arches that create a hall church like an upside-down miner's cart. The figure of St Barbara, patron saint of mining, rendered in relief on one of the façade pylons is the work of Trieste sculptor Ugo Carà.

On August 7, 1936, the construction site was visited by Mussolini himself. On this occasion, the Pula daily *Corriere istriano* noted with delight the reportage that closely followed the course of construction of the new town. The inauguration was organised on November 4, 1937³² in the presence of the Duke of Spoleto³³ and a number of distinguished public personalities, including Giovanni Host Venturi, then the State Undersecretary at the Ministry of Communications. The documentary film "La bianca città del carbone"³⁴, filmed in the characteristic manner of glorifying the regime by aestheticizing space as a place of belonging³⁵, is illustrative of the occasion.³⁶ Prior to the ceremony, an exhibition of Italian architecture in Istria was held in the headquarters of the Provincial Government in Pula, including several photographs of Arsia, then still under construction.³⁷ As such, the futurist (and Fascist) obsession with dynamics and speed, in the case of the rapid construction of Arsia, became a celebratory motif, based on the power of the image mediatized by photography, representing the achievements of Modernity as an expression of the intrinsic artistic nature of architecture.³⁸

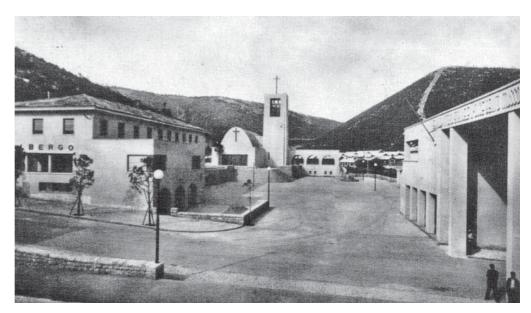
Public Space as "Social Condenser"

The greatest attention was devoted to the urban centre as a "social condenser", a stage of social interaction for the otherwise rather strictly separated inhabitants of the town.³⁹ To fit to this purpose, the main squares of new Italian cities⁴⁰ were designed as settings for the given ideological context.⁴¹ The church is placed in the corner of the square, on a dais that in its height competes with the level of the balcony of the *Dopolavoro* (*Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*). The key social and political role of the latter building is emphasized by the expressiveness of its architectural language, as well as its eclectic mixture of functions: on the ground floor was a community centre, a theatre and film hall seating 400, a butcher's, and a basement bar with a boules yard. Next to it stood the building of the Fascist political party (*Casa del Fascio*) with an upper balcony for political speeches⁴², while commercial facilities are located on the ground floor. Below the balcony was a statue of a nude miner represented as a warrior, the work of Trieste sculptor Marcello Mascherini.⁴³ The sculptures and statues, most of which were pulled down and destroyed after 1945, had an important role in shaping the visuality of space, in which the state very clearly determined the ideological framework in its role as patron.⁴⁴ Following the war and the change of political authority, they were replaced with messages propagating the system of socialist Yugoslavia. Opposite *Dopolavoro* on the west side of the square

VIEW OF THE URBAN CENTRE TOWARD PIAZZA DEL MERCATO

POHĽAD NA CENTRUM MESTA SMEROM K NÁMESTIU PIAZZA DEL MERCATO

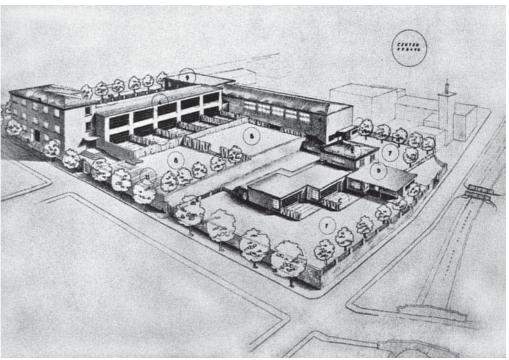
Source Zdroj: Le opere del'Regime in Istria nel quinquenio 1933 – 1937. Pola: Editore F. Rocco, 1938



COMPLEX OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, KINDERGARTEN AND CASA BALILLA

BUDOVY ZÁKLADNEJ ŠKOLY, MATERSKEJ ŠKOLY A CASA BALILLA

Source Zdroj: Arsia, il villagio per il minatori della S.A. Carbonifera Arsa, Trieste: Editrice Libraria, 1937



is a hotel for mine employees, with a cafe on the ground floor, a restaurant on the first floor, and fourteen hotel rooms on the second floor. All floors were connected by an electric dumbwaiter. The futuristic character of the space can be recognised from the remaining details (staircase, ceramic tiles). On the south side of the square is a purely commercial complex, with shops and arcades. ⁴⁵ As well as in the city loggia and in the shops on the *Piazzeta*, there are arched porticoes on the ground floor of the hotel, a component part of which is a canteen for officials, and the city café.

South of the square is an educational complex: an elementary school for 400 boys and girls, a kindergarten for about 60 children, modern and functionally designed, with a pavilion with gardens placed on terraces, and the building of the health service. Special attention is paid to thoughtful elaboration of the differing segments of the educational process⁴⁶, including practical and sports activities.⁴⁷ For additional educational programs, alongside the school there were plans to build a youth organisation centre (*Casa Balilla*) in *lictor* style, but due to lack of funds this was never built. A hospital and an outpatient clinic were built for the needs of the residents, while next to

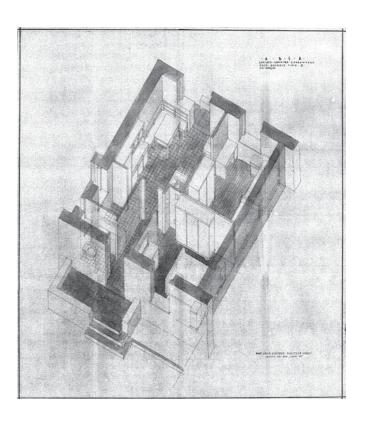


VIEW OF ARSIA/RAŠA, 1937 POHĽAD NA ARSIU/RAŠU, 1937 Source Zdroj: Arsia, il villagio per il minatori della S.A. Carbonifera Arsa, Trieste: Editrice Libraria, 1937

WORKER'S HOUSE, TYPE B (CASA OPERAIA TIPO B)

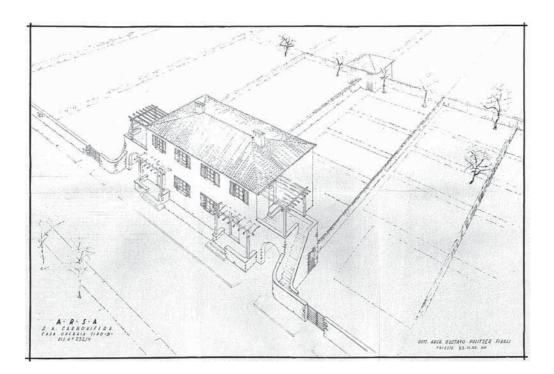
ROBOTNÍCKY DOM, TYP B

Source Zdroj: 232/10, 1935, HR-DAPA-649 ISTARSKI UGLJENOKOPI RAŠA 1870/1945 [1946/1949] box 29. State Archives, Pazin



the entrance to the mine stood the heating plant that provided central heating and hot water. Near the hospital there is a sports centre with a swimming pool, equipped with two reinforced concrete diving boards, reflecting the great extent to which Fascist ideology included programs for workers' physical activities. A Opposite the hospital, the mine's multifunctional administration building was located, with a chemical laboratory, a pit surveying department, a technical service and archive. The exterior and interior are characterised by a minimalist functionalist approach and expressionist accents, still visible in the entrance area and staircase, where glass walls and combinations of different types of wood and stone panels play a significant role in modulating the spatial qualities.

Two-thirds of the settlement consists of rows of working-class dwellings. Characterised by clarity of functional and social organisation, these houses are completely set apart from the housing zone for the officials and the managers near the main square with its purpose-directed public structures, while the industrial section occupied the southern part of the complex. The semi-detached workers' houses (built in four different types), with four flats to a building, were conceived entirely in accord with the CIAM principles of the "minimal dwelling".49 The dwelling units differ in size and number of rooms and were completely independent of each other. The flats consisted of a living room-kitchen, two bedrooms and a bathroom and storeroom, equipped with functional fittings50, featuring running water, electric lighting, coal-fired heating supplied from the local pit. Each dwelling also had about 200 square metres of cultivable land on the courtyard side, and on the street side a pergola,51 which gave this austere public housing an additional ambient dimension. Loggias in the function of covered entrances contribute to the volumetric dynamics.⁵² Two three-story buildings were built for single workers (type E for 152 and E1 for 180 people). On the other side of the city centre were the houses for the clerks (types C and C1), set off by their higher standards of comfort from the workers', as well as in the quality of construction and materials used, while the houses for administrative staff (types D, D1, D2)) were even more comfortable in scale, fitting and spatial disposition. The house for the mine manager (type D₃), was designed as a modernist villa with a flat roof and a garage, characterized by the highest standard of architectural design. Unfortunately, after 1945 the apartments were reduced in scale and converted into separate units, in accordance with the housing norms in socialist Yugoslavia.



WORKER'S HOUSE, TYPE B (ARSA S.A. CARBONIFERA CASA OPERAIA TIPO B)

ROBOTNÍCKY DOM, TYP B

Source Zdroj: Dis., 232/9, 1935, HR-DAPA-649 ISTARSKI UGLJENOKOPI RAŠA 1870/1945 [1946/1949] box 29. State Archives, Pazin



WORKER'S HOUSE; DINING ROOM

ROBOTNÍCKY DOM; JEDÁLEŇ

Source Zdroj: Arsia, il villagio per il minatori della S.A. Carbonifera Arsa, Trieste: Editrice Libraria, 1937



HOUSE TYPE E, HOTEL FOR BACHELOR WORKERS

DOM TYPU E, HOTEL PRE SLOBODNÝCH ROBOTNÍKOV

Arsia, il villagio per il minatori della S.A. Carbonifera Arsa, Trieste: Editrice Libraria 1937

Politics and Space Revisited

After 1945, now within Yugoslavia, the coal mines became an important resource in the post-war reconstruction of the socialist Yugoslav state. In this period, the demographic structure underwent repeated seismic transformations, and with it the manner of life and the unique Istrian cultural identity, which through their multicultural complexity evaded any clear-cut interpretations at the level of relations between coloniser and colonised, or periphery and centre.⁵³ Perceived as one of the relics of the Italian Fascist regime, Arsia/Raša went through radical transformation in the period of socialist Yugoslavia. The majority of the Italian population emigrated, and the use of the mine declined, coming to an end in 1991. The urban context, designed to communicate the meanings of the Italian Fascist state's power and politics in public spaces, became dislocated immediately after 1945: Piazza del Impero became Trg Republike (Republic Square), Via Roma was renamed to ulica Petra Drapšina, and the road originally named after the Italian king Vittorio Emanuele III became Marshal Tito Street. Political propaganda tended to promote an idealized image of the city and the quality of life in it. An illustrative example is the 1950 monograph "Ugljenokopi Raša-rudnici našega crnog zlata" (Raša Coal Mines- the mines of our black gold) by Ilija Uzelac54. The period of the fascist regime is presented as the polar opposite of socialism. By taking the spatial segregation as a starting point, the author argues that miners were not only exploited but also socially humiliated, because the quality of everyday life was exclusive. And drastic transformations were imposed on the public buildings related to the ideology of the previous regime. The Casa de Fascio was adapted for the newly founded People's Open University, while the socialist institution of cultural centre or culture house took over the role of the *Dopolavoro*, i.e. the centre of social life where numerous activities were held aimed at creating free time, from a library with a reading room to a concert hall, theatre and other cultural programs. Due to the reduction of mining activity in the 1960s, most of the administrative buildings lost their purpose: the directorate became the production hall of a toy

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factory⁵⁵, and the hotel was transformed to a health centre.⁵⁶ The cafe, the municipal office building, cinema hall and theatre, as well as a sports complex with a swimming pool with a diving board, a football field with an athletics track, and accompanying sports facilities retained the original use. Fragments of everyday life from the end of the 1940s can be reconstructed from the newsletter *Raški rudar*⁵⁷, particularly from the critical notes expressed in the visual language of comics. After the Trieste crisis in the early 1950s when Istria was overtaken by another wave of migration, the remainder of the Italian population mostly left. Meanwhile, the development of mass tourism from the end of the 1960s to the end of the 1980s was mainly restricted to the coastal zone and localised in hotel resorts nearby tourist centres. The situation changed drastically after the break-up of socialist Yugoslavia, when refugees from threatened areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia fled to this area at the beginning of the 1990s. And, unfortunately, instead of a planned and well-thought-out reconstruction, there have been frequent new waves of devastation of the remaining architectural heritage.

Conclusion

The successive historic epochs of the Italian Fascist regime, World War II, the capitulation of Italy in 1943, and finally the region's integration to the newly founded state of socialist Yugoslavia determined the historical, political, and cultural setting in Istria during the 20th century. In this period the demographic structure changed radically and repeatedly, and with it the culture of everyday life. As such, the urban identity cannot be made to conform with historiographical narratives based on inter-relations of coloniser and colonised, or periphery and centre. Furthermore, the comparison of modern architecture built in Istria during the period of the Italian regime with urban forms in the parts of Italy closer to the centre of political power clearly demonstrates that the urban concept of Arsia was more modern than was conceptually proclaimed by the totalitarianism of the Italian state. In the former Yugoslavia, being "labelled" as a layer of Italian modernist architectural and urban heritage, Arsia/Raša was considered as the "other" of the socialist social, political, and cultural context. The stagnation continued after the 1990s in post-socialist transition, when most industrial production collapsed, followed by further devastation of the abandoned structures, leading to further decline of the settlement. Yet the main problem is the absence of a comprehensive strategy of urban regeneration for the town's 's cultural and historical identity. To be able to demystify power and discourse in the format of critical re-definition of their relations, an analysis is required of the social preconditions within differentiated fields, including conflicts and crises. This article aims to explore the case study of Arsia/Raša in the context of cultural history, hence reaching beyond the local and the regional framework.

An example of successful urban renewal could be found in the re-evaluation of the former mining complex in Labin, where an alternative cultural and artistic scene draws on the memory of industrial heritage to bring new uses and users to the abandoned tunnels and halls of a coal mine. It is indicative that this "sub"/cultural initiative during the past decades has involved a wide range of institutions, leading to a strategy of urban renewal. As part of the revitalization of the complex, an excellent example of a modern interpretation of the historical environment is the transformation of the former administrative building into a public library.⁵⁸

The case study of Arsia/Raša reveals the contradictory strategies used to redefine its identity: active public forgetting of an ideologised past, all the way from fascist Italy through socialist Yugoslavia to the post-socialist transition. Faceent initiatives to promote an image of the city as a museum tend to commercialize the urban and architectural identity as a tourist attraction. Yet, the question of the de-ideologisation of the town's memory as a starting point for conceptualization of the present is still open.

- 1 ARBUTINA, Dražen. 1997. Talijanska arhitektura druge četvrtine XX. st. u kontekstu političkih kvalifikacija. *Prostor*, 14, pp. 321 356; CANALI, Ferruccio. 2006. Architettura del moderno nell'Istria italiana (1922 1942). *Quaderni*, 17, pp. 225 275.
- 2 RADOVIĆ MAHEČIĆ, Darja. 2000. Raša – grad-spomenik moderne arhitekture – Gustava Pulitzer-Finalija. Radovi Instituta za povijest umjetnosti, 24, pp. 113 - 126; VALUŠEK, Berislav. 2000. Gustavo Pulitzer Finali: Raša - Arsia. Rovinj: HABITAT d.o.o; ROGINA, Krešimir. 2002. Raša je naša: o potrebi i naporima inkorporiranja vrijednih djela talijanskoga racionalizma u hrvatski kulturni prostor. Kontura: art magazin, 72 – 73, pp. 122 – 123; RAMŠAK, Jure. 2016. Avtarkična strogost in preprosta italijanska duša: konstrukcija novega rudarskega mesta Raša v vzhodni Istri (1936 - 1937). Acta Histriae, 24(4), pp. 855 - 872.
- 3 The town was initially named Liburnia, but during the construction the name changed to Arsia, which after 1945 changed to the Croatian variant Raša.
- 4 BESANA, Renato et al. 2002. Metafisica construita: Le Città di fondazione degli anni Trenta dall'Italia all'Oltremare. Milano: Touring Editore, pp. 155 – 161; CAPROTTI, Federico. 2007. Mussolini's Cities: Internal Colonialism in Italy, 1930 – 1939. Amherst: Cambria Press.
- 5 VORANO, Tulio. 1997. Istarski ugljenokopi: četiri stoljeća rudarenja u Istri. Labin: Istarski ugljenokopi Tupljak d.d.; RACOVAZ, Rinaldo. 2016. Arsia, un'opera d'arte d'edilizia moderna. Raša: Zajednica Talijana "Giuseppina Martinuzzi"/Labin: Vijeće talijanske manjine grada Labina.
- 6 For the context of social and cultural engineering in the fascist regime see: BEN-GHIAT, Ruth. 2001. Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922–1945. Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press.
- 7 It is symptomatic that the protagonists of Italian architecture in the Istria of the thirties are not mentioned even in texts that pretend to be a synthesis: see for example CIUCCI, Giorgio. 2002. Gli architetti e il fascismo: Architettura e città 1922 1944. Torino: Einaudi.
- 8 For the interdisciplinary methods in the research of Raša, see KRECIC, Francesco. 2012. Arsia, la bianca città del carbone. Storia dela fondazione di un centro minerario in Istria tra le due guerre. Udine: Forum, pp. 71 175; for using sociological-anthropological perspective, see: MATOŠEVIĆ, Andrea. 2011. Pod zemljom Antropologija rudarenja na Labinštini u XX. stoljeću. Zagreb: Sveučilište Juraj Dobrila u Puli, Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku.

- 9 For the political history of Istria: IVETIC, Egidio (ed.). 2006. Istra nel Tempo: Manuale di storia regionale dell'Istria con riferimenti alla città di Fiume. Rovinj: Centro di ricerche storiche di Rovigno: Collana degli Atti N. 26.
- 10 Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (International Congresses of Modern Architecture).
- 11 KARAČ, Zlatko. 2012. Planirani novoutemeljeni industrijski gradovi u Hrvatskoj između dvaju svjetskih ratova: Borovo Uble Raša Podlabin. In: Đekić, V. and Palinić, N. (eds.). Zbornik radova 4. međunarodne konferencije o industrijskoj baštini "Rijeka i brodograđevno naslijeđe". Rijeka: Pro Torpedo, pp. 701 714; ŽIVIĆ, Dražen, ŠILJ ŽEBEC Ivana and CVIKIĆ, Sandra (eds.). 2019. Baťa Borovo (1931 2016). Povijesno naslijeđe i perspektive. Zagreb/Vukovar: Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar.
- 12 By the Decision of the Ministry of Culture and Media, the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, the Conservation Department in Pula from 2021, the municipality of Raša is included into the Register of Cultural Properties of the Republic of Croatia as a protected cultural and historical entity. This status is in accordance with the initiatives of local activists to establish a town as a city-museum.
- 13 Today Czechia.
- **14** FARIELLO, Francesco. 1939. Le colonie industriali: Villaggio industriale di Arsia. *Architettura*, 5, pp. 318 320.
- **15** Gio Ponti. 1938. Arsia, nuova città. *Domus*, 121, pp. 34 35.
- 16 Guido Segre (1881–1945) had a key role in the construction of Arsia, after the company was taken over by Azienda Carboni Italiani (A.Ca.I.) in 1935. Despite his ties with Mussolini, Segre was removed from all public positions after the adoption of racial laws in 1938 due to his Jewish descent.
- 17 Pulitzer visited the construction site for the first time in the fall of 1935. The original urban plan, the location of the city centre and the typology of residential buildings were modified during the construction. Krecic, F., 2012, p. 76.
- **18** For an overview of the construction process see: MANIN, Marino and ČAPO, Hrvoje. 2020. Construction of miners' town in Raša (1936/37). *Review of Croatian History*, 16(1), pp. 109 123.
- 19 During Italian rule, three new settlements were constructed in today's Croatia: Arsia and Pozzo Littorio in Istria and Villaggio Luigi Razza on the island of Lastovo.
- **20** Unlike Pulitzer who emigrated in time to Switzerland and then to Ame-

- rica, Segre had to seek refuge from the pogrom in the Vatican, where he died in 1945. Pulitzer also participated in the planning of the mining city Carbonia on Sardinia (1937 1938, co-authored with architect Ignazio Guidi and engineer Cesare Valle). The degree to which Raša and Carbonia figure in the monograph published to mark the exhibition of the same name can be used for comparison, see: PELLEGRINI, Giorgio et al. 2006. Città di fondazione italiane 1928 1942. Latina: Novecento
- **21** CAPPELLATO, Gabriele. 1987. Il disegno della nave. *Domus*, 688, pp. 6 7.
- **22** Also known as Augusto Cernigoi (1898 1985).
- **23** Also known as Albino Lachi (1905 1979).
- 24 Franjo (Francesco) Kosovel (1906 1990) studied architecture in Ljubljana. He was a member of *Studio Stuard* from 1930 to 1944. After the war, designed interiors of public institutions, residential buildings, and memorials.
- 25 Henrik (Enrico) Ukmar (1909 1945) studied architecture in Moscow. Worked at *Studio Stuard* from 1935 to 1944, when he was deported to Auschwitz where he died in March 1945.
- **26** Construction began in March 1936, and continued after the official inauguration until 1940.
- 27 Born to parents of Hungarian origin in Trieste, Pulitzer studied at the Polytechnic in Munich under Professor and architect Theodor Fischer (1862 – 1938), one of the founding members of the Deutscher Werkbund. After three years of study, he moved to Sao Paulo in 1914 and stayed there until 1919. In 1920 he returned to Trieste and together with his colleague Giovan Battista Ceas (1893 - 1975) opened a studio for decorative arts and furnishings Stuard (Studio di architettura e decorazione). In 1923 he took part in the First Biennial of Decorative Art in Monza, as well as in the subsequent Monza exhibitions and in the Milan Triennale. Between 1931 and 1932, with the orders for the furnishing of the Conte di Savoia ocean liner and the Neptunia and Oceania units, the Studio Stuard confirmed its solid leadership in the design of naval interiors. Alongside his activity as a naval interior designer, he was also an interior designer for offices. commercial spaces and hotels. At the beginning of the 1930's Pulitzer moved to London for a series of commissions (offices, hotel, Five years later, the studio got an order from the ship-owning family of Cosulich to design the interior of the ship "Saturnia". From 1925 to 1934, he designed the interiors of most vessels built in Trieste and Monfalcone, as well as ships of Italian and foreign companies. For particular

- aspects of Pulitzer's oeuvre, see: Gustavo Pulitzer Finali, 1935. Navi e case. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli Editore; RICCESI, Donato. 1985. Gustavo Pulitzer Finali Il disegno della nave: Allestimenti interni 1925 – 1967. Venezia: Marsilio
- **28** A possible reference could be traced in the galleried ballatoio housing of Milan from the 1920's.
- 29 Pulitzer found sources of inspiration in the traditional architecture of the cities of southern Italy and Sicily, the formal characteristics of which he transferred into a contemporary language.
- **30** RUBBI, Antonio. 1995. *Moderna arhitektura u Istri*. Pula: Društvo arhitekata Istre, pp. 6 7; Radović Mahečić, D., 2000, p. 122.
- 31 On the relationships between traditionalism and modernism in Italian rationalism see GHIRARDO, Diane Yvonne. 1980. Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the rationalist's Role in Regime Building. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 39(2), pp. 109 127.
- 32 On the occasion of the inauguration of the new city, a promotional monograph was published: AAVV. 1937. Arsa il villagio per i minatori della S.A. carbonifera ARSA. Trieste: Editrice Libraria.
- 33 Aimone di Savoia-Aosta, Duke of Spoleto (1900 1948), at that time the commander of the naval base in Pula with the rank of rear admiral, was in 1941 appointed King of the Independent State of Croatia under the name of Tomislav II, although never enthroned.
- 34 Archivio Storico Istituto Luce. Giornale Luce B 1196 (1937): Arsia. La bianca città del carbone, 11/11/1937 [online]. Available at: https://patrimonio.archivioluce.com/luce-web/detail/IL5000024051/2/inaugurata-citta-mineraria-arsia-alla-presenza-del-duca-spoleto-e-del-sottosegret (Accessed: 20 August 2022).
- 35 FALASCA-ZAMPONI, Francesca. 1997. Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy. Berkeley/ Los Angeles/London: University of California Press.
- **36** On this occasion a number of facilities were inaugurated. HR-DAPA-55, Prefektura Istre u Puli, b. 307. State Archives, Pazin.
- 37 The review of the exhibition mentioned that the photographs of the Autonomous Institute of Popular Houses with the village of Arsia are photographic assumptions that demonstrate the individual phases of construction of the village and that document how it arose in a very short time. La Mostra delle opere del

- Regime nella Provincia di Pola. *Corriere Istriano*, 24 October 1937, p. 2.
- 38 In the frame of the promotional campaign, a monograph on Arsia was published: AAVV. 1937. Arsa il villagio per i minatori della S.A. carbonifera ARSA. Trieste: Editrice Libraria.
- 39 Archival fonds of the Istrian coal mines of Raša, 1870 – 1940, b. 29 (HR-DAPA-649, Istarski ugljenokopi Raša 1870/1945[1946/1949]. State Archives, Pazin.
- **40** On the role of mass assemblies in the strategy of the fascist ideology see: GENTILE, Emilio. 2005. Il culto del littorio: La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista. Rome/Bari: Editori Laterza
- 41 After 1925 he was engaged in the design of the interiors of luxury passenger liners, among which there are some superb examples of total design in the Art Deco style; after 1920 he was engaged on the design of exhibition and trade fair set-ups, and among other things took part in the most important exhibitions of decorative arts between the wars; RICCESI. Donato. 1985. Gustavo Pulitzer Finali Il disegno della nave Allestimenti interni 1925 1967. Venezia: Marsilio Editori.
- **42** It was from this balcony that Mussolini gave a speech during his visit to Arsia while it was still being built.
- 43 In a letter of Pulitzer kept in the State Archive in Pazin, the architect. within the context of this plan, provided for a decorative inventory that among other things was constituted by the fine handcrafted furnishings of the church and the main square. For the Casa del Fascio a figural composition was originally planned, instead of which the statue of the belligerent miner, the coat of arms of the province and the emblem of the regime, and the slab with an inscription in relief placed on the day of the inauguration of the new city: quoting il Duce Benito Mussolini: this is a working place built in the days of an unjust siege completed in the dawn of the empire to create a fascist Italy that is increasingly becoming mistress of her own fate. In 1950 this plaque was replaced with the inscription worded as follows: Today, September 1950, in this building the Istrian coal mines were handed over to the management of the workers. This replacement tells of the importance of the symbolism of the public area and the mine.
- **44** STONE, Marla. 1997. The State as Patron: Making Official Culture in Fascist Italy. In: Affron, M. and Antliff, M. (eds.). Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 205 238.

- **45** Within the complex, there was also a bakery with an electric bread oven
- **46** The school was named after Guglielmo Marconi (1874–1937), Italian physicist and inventor who received the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1909.
- 47 According to some sources, Pulitzer requested changes due to the Montessori educational method. The school had fields for sports activities and classes in agriculture.
- **48** Other sports facilities were subsequently added; basketball and bocce courts, bowling alleys, etc.
- 49 The typology of houses with gardens intended for flower beds and vegetable gardens was an integral part of propaganda in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, as a substitute for modern workers' settlements that became synonymous with the tendencies to democratize housing policy standards established in the Weimar Republic.
- **50** Different versions of mass produced furniture designed for this purpose were provided.
- **51** Fruit trees and wisteria pergolas were planted in the gardens of the workers' houses.
- **52** This element is also derived from traditional Istrian architecture.
- **53** During the 1930s Pula had ten cinemas, and by the 2020s, only one.
- **54** UZELAC, Ilija. 1950. *Ugljenokopi Raša: Rudnici našega crnog zlata*. Zagreb: Društvo novinara NR Hrvatske.
- 55 In 1958, the knitwear factory "25 of May" was founded in Raša, and in 1968, the production started in the toy factory, founded with the aim of employing women, most of whom were unemployed wives of miners.
- **56** Even though there was already a hospital in use.
- 57 Raški rudar (Miner from Raša), the newsletter of the Istrian coal mines, was launched as one of the first "factory" newsletters in socialist Yugoslavia, published intermittently from 1947 to 1993.
- **58** The authors of the project are Ivana Žalac, Margita Grubiša, Igor Presečan and Damir Gamulin (2013).
- **59** For a valuable methodological approach to engaged research see: MORAVČÍKOVÁ, Henrieta and SZALAY, Peter. 2021. The Heritage of Postwar Modernism: Engaged Research. *Architektúra e- urbanizmus*, 55(3 4), pp. 122 145. doi: https://doi.org/10.31577/archandurb.2021.55.3-4.1