

Istrians out of Istria – A Disappearing Community

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Abstract

Istrian diaspora can't be identified with Croatian (national) idea of diaspora, because Istria was a border region belonging in the 1st half of the 20th century to Italy and before that to Austria. Feeling uncomfortable within the frames of the Yugoslav republic and its communist ideology of that time, immediately after the World War 2nd many Istrians left for the USA and Canada. Fewer of them left for Argentina, where a group of Istrians already had lived since the 20-es and 30-es, when they left predominantly because of economic motives. Based on a ample research and an exhibition made in the Ethnographic museum of Istria (Pazin, Croatia) about their memorabilia I am going to present the transformation of the ways how this "regional" diaspora has communicated with the "Old homeland" and what material and stories they have used to express their identity. Since that community is slowly disappearing, the last generation expresses their belonging to Istira through other practices, objects and rhetoric. The museum project changed also the way how Istrian population of today's Istria has understood looked at exiled Istrians and that relationship after the post 2nd World War time was often difficult and full of mutual prejudices.