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Krašić, Wollyfy

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WOLLFY KRAŠIĆ

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# Stop Mass Exodus: Guidelines by the Reform Part of the Croatian State-Party Leadership for the Policy Regarding Labour Migrants from the Socialist Republic of Croatia in Western Europe

## Summary

The paper presents the fundamental guidelines issued by the reform part of the Croatian state-party leadership in the early 1970 s regarding the issue of the increasing number of labour migrants from the Socialist Republic of Croatia in Western Europe. In this context, an analysis of the aforementioned trend within the Communist Party of Croatia was made, which was oriented towards spreading the autonomy of the Socialist Republic of Croatia within Yugoslavia. It limited the introduction of market mechanisms in the Yugoslav economy, and abolished the patterns of operation and behaviour of state-party officials, the roots of which lied in the Yugoslav unitarism or the idea of Greater Serbia. Since the reform movement had been ended in Croatia by force, it was not even attempted to implement a part of the planned policies. Although several policies continued to be advocated, there was no genuine wish or possibility for the implementation. For the purposes of comparison, the paper illustrates – using selected documents from the second half of the 1970 s and the 1980 s – the relationship of the Yugoslav communist regime to labour migrants, in particular the ones from the Socialist Republic of Croatia, and the main characteristics of the return-emigrant trends in the labour migrant population on the relation

Yugoslavia – Western Europe. Nevertheless, in this period, further mass exodus was halted, and even a part of labour migrants returned. This was what the reform part of the Croatian state-party leadership strived to achieve, yet the principal reason lied in the suppressing factors in Western Europe. On the other hand, however, those labour migrants, who managed to keep/get employment in Western Europe in the midst of crisis, were joined by their family members. This radically reduced their chance of return. The Yugoslav authorities claimed in public, and their officials in many closed meetings, how very dedicated they were to the return of labour migrants, although the regime suffered from major difficulties in the context of employment, even of the persons who were forced to return. During the 1960 s and in the early 1970 s, the Yugoslav diplomatic, consular and other officials abroad continued to maltreat, humiliate and deprive labour migrants of the Croatian nationality of the recognition of their national identity.

**Keywords:** Croatian reform movement; Socialist Republic of Croatia; labour migrants; Savka Dabčević-Kučar; Catholic Church; Bjelovar Community of Municipalities.

## Introduction

The phenomenon of citizens leaving communist Yugoslavia for so-called "temporary work" in Western European capitalist countries, many of whom remained permanently abroad, is an important topic for research into the characteristics and success or failure of the so-called "Yugoslav" special path to socialism or socialist self-government. Since the early 1960 s, tens of thousands of workers from Yugoslavia, nominally a working-class state, from a society on the proclaimed path to classlessness, happiness, and prosperity for the once oppressed, have sought work and better living conditions in capitalist countries, a system that should have collapsed, as the Yugoslav communists claimed after the end of the World War II. Such a situation was a serious blow to the communist regime in Belgrade in many areas, but particularly in propaganda. Moreover, the number of migrant workers grew rapidly, and tens of thousands soon became hundreds of thousands. But even before this process began, Belgrade had capitulated in a sense. Indeed, in order for a huge mass of workers to make their way to Western Europe, the Yugoslav communist regime had to ease restrictions on Yugoslav citizens traveling abroad.

Already in the first half of the 1960 s, Yugoslav employment offices and employers and companies from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) developed cooperation. In fact, the largest number of workers from Yugoslavia went to that country, and one of the reasons for that was the strong German economic growth, which, among other things, generated the need for a large number of workers, a good part

of which could be raised solely by importing labor. As the number of Yugoslav citizens in the FRG increased steadily, an intergovernmental treaty was signed in 1968 between the FRG and the Yugoslav authorities, thus establishing the conditions of employment and the rights of Yugoslav workers. According to some statistics, two years earlier, 96,673 people from Yugoslavia were in Germany. This number increased considerably after the signing of the treaty, reaching about 478,000 in 1972. For comparison, foreign workers from Yugoslavia ranked first in the number of foreign workers in the FRG in that year. According to some data and estimates, between 650,000 and 700,000 Yugoslav citizens, most of them Croats, worked and lived in the FRG in the late 1980s (Čizmić et al., 2005, pp. 231–232). A more specific data conveys that on March 31, 1971, according to official Yugoslav statistics, just over 227,000 residents of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (SRC) were working abroad. Their share in the total population of migrant workers from Yugoslavia was 33.4%, and the population of the SRC had a share of only 21.6% in the total population of Yugoslavia (Informacija o aktuelnim pitanjima u oblasti zapošljavanja naših građana u inozemstvu, March, 1972, p. 7). Later, when analyzing the data collected for the purposes of the census, it was found that in 1971, 763,725 people were counted in the category of so-called "temporary workers" – migrant workers and their family members. Most of them were from the SRC, namely 254,856, followed by 229,382 from the Socialist Republic of Serbia (of which 133,389 were from Serbia proper, 25,500 from the Autonomous Province of Kosovo, and 70,493 from the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina), 49,493 from the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SR BiH) 146,818, and so on. In terms of percentages, the situation looked like this: 33.4% from SRC, 19.2% from SR BiH, 17.5% from Serbia proper, 9.2% from the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, 3.3% from the Autonomous Province of Kosovo, 8.9% from the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM), 7% from the Socialist Republic of Slovenia (SRS), etc. According to the figures, the SRC had the largest number of migrant workers in absolute and relative terms (Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1986, p. 447).

The described course of events had a number of negative consequences for the Yugoslav communist regime, but also for the nations living in Yugoslavia. People, particularly those of younger age, went abroad to work temporarily and often permanently. Some underdeveloped areas experienced significant depopulation alongside migration to larger cities. These trends have led to disruptions in the demographic structure of certain nations, particularly for the Croats, who have emigrated by far the most in the first fifteen years since the process began, and to increased underdevelopment in the less developed parts of both Yugoslavia and Croatia. In addition to the significant blow in the area of propaganda caused by this phenomenon, the

regime had to confront in various ways the ideological, political, cultural, and other views that the migrant workers encountered in the West and which were then transmitted and disseminated in Yugoslavia. The knowledge that the standard of living in the West was generally higher than in Yugoslavia, along with actual evidence (better cars, various household appliances that Yugoslav industry did not produce, more diverse clothing, money savings, etc.), further undermined the belief of Yugoslav citizens that self-governing socialism was the preferred system.

However, the regime has also benefited considerably from the situation described above. The import of products that the Yugoslav economy did not produce also had its advantages, as it satisfied certain needs of the inhabitants of Yugoslavia that the domestic production could not satisfy. Moreover, the Yugoslav authorities largely solved the problem of high unemployment, which began in the early 1960s with the end of the postwar recovery period, based on the development of heavy industry and strict state control of the economy (Lafitić, 1997, p. 45). It was generally a kind of "release valve" for dealing with dissidents of all kinds, not just those who wanted better working and living conditions. At that time, people returning from abroad brought with them new professional knowledge and skills, but also savings that could contribute to the development of certain branches of the Yugoslav economy.

However, by far the greatest benefit the so-called "temporary workers" had brought to the Belgrade regime was through remittances of foreign currency into the country. Between 1971 and 1981, Yugoslav migrant workers remitted over \$21 billion to Yugoslavia, or about 25 percent of Yugoslavia's total foreign exchange earnings. The foreign exchange that entered Yugoslavia in this way was of great significance in balancing Yugoslavia's balance of payments and also had many other positive effects on the economy as a whole. To illustrate, in 1980 remittances from migrant workers covered 95% of Yugoslavia's foreign exchange deficit. Another figure shows that in 1976 migrant workers' remittances covered 106.8% of the import of means of labor (Vedriš, 1980, p. 127). There would be more similar data along the same lines, but even from these it is clear that migrant workers were an important wheel in the functioning of the feeble and increasingly reeling Yugoslav economy.

Considering the importance of migrant workers for the Yugoslav regime, the attitude of the Yugoslav communist authorities towards this population group is of great significance for the study of the phenomenon of "temporary workers". This paper is primarily concerned with the attempt of the SRC authorities to address this problem in a more serious manner in the early 1970s. Indeed, it was the period of the Croatian reformist movement, better known as the "Croatian Spring", when the reformist part of the leadership of the League of Communists of Croatia (LCC) tried to redefine a number of previous policies regarding the position of the SRC in the

Yugoslav federation, the mechanisms in the economy, the attitude towards part of the Croatian identity markers, the position of the LCC in society and relations within LCC, and the attitude towards political dissidents. As this paper will show, these efforts have largely focused on the issue of migrant workers.

Specifically, the conclusions of the December 25, 1970 meeting of the SRC Parliamentary Foreign Policy and External Relations Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) are analyzed. The discussion at the meeting was based on the report of four groups of parliament members who in November 1970 visited the FRG (two groups), Austria, and Switzerland, to learn about the lives and problems of SRC migrant workers. The conclusions of the Committee are placed in the context of general reform efforts of a part of the leadership of Croatian government. The mentioned document gives only a limited insight into this extremely complex issue, but it can very well serve as a source to identify certain tendencies and efforts to change them. At the aforementioned meeting, the Committee adopted five conclusions, the last of which contained three sub-paragraphs. Much of the text shows that the Conclusions were formulated in accordance with the policies of the reform-oriented part of the LCC leadership in various areas. The latter political group within the LCC called for and sought to implement the most comprehensive reforms in the economic and administrative spheres, i.e., to introduce elements of market economy into the Yugoslav socialist system and to achieve greater autonomy from the federal center in Belgrade.

The Croatian reformist movement was extremely heterogeneous, lacking a unified program, leadership, and goal. In addition to the reform-oriented part of the LCC leadership, it also included *Matica hrvatska* (Croatian Heritage Foundation), the oldest Croatian cultural institution, which led a broad process of affirming Croatian national identity in culture, art, science, and public life, and a heterogeneous student movement, in which the most prominent role was played by active Catholics and individuals highly conscious in the Croatian national sense, and who demanded in a more radical way the implementation of reforms that went in the direction of establishing the SRC as a sovereign state of the Croatian nation. It should be noted that many members of *Matica hrvatska* and members of the student movement wanted the creation of a fully independent and democratic Croatian state (Radelić, 2008, pp. 379–381; Zidić, 2017, pp. 27–79). The three main elements of the Croatian Spring did not work together, some goals and methods of action were diametrically opposed, but due to the enormous strength of the equally heterogeneous opponents of reform, in certain situations they tried to avoid conflict, to show understanding and even to support each other tactically and in principle (Krašić, 2018, pp. 417–420).

In addition to its activities in the cultural and scientific spheres, Matica hrvatska has become an increasingly strong opposition to the ruling LCC, expressing its own views on numerous issues and problems in the political and economic spheres. The economic analyses of some of Matica hrvatska's leading intellectuals, such as brothers Marko and Vladimir Veselica, Šime Đodan, and Hrvoje Šošić, differed significantly from the views of the official authorities and the reformist group in the LCC Central Committee led by Dabčević-Kučar and the opposing group as well, which began to emerge in the spring of 1971 under the leadership of the most influential Croatian communist Vladimir Bakarić. This is supported by the fact that the latter believed that the claims of leading members of Matica hrvatska about the economic exploitation of Croatia, which then led, among other things, to mass emigration, were very similar to the theses of the Croatian anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist political emigration to the West (Mujadžević, 2011, p. 269). It is not an insignificant fact that some of them were sentenced to the highest prison terms after the violent end of the Croatian Spring – Marko Veselica to seven years in prison and four years of public work and Šime Đodan to six years in prison (Drača, 1992, p. 198, 202.; Đodan, 1998, p. 641). In the aforementioned court decisions, their theses on Croatia's economic situation played a central role, as did the criminal complaint against eleven prominent members of Matica hrvatska filed in early January 1972. In this document, Marko Veselica is listed as the first suspect and Đodan as the second. All defendants were charged with "systematically and synchronously developing and disseminating the counter-revolutionary thesis that the current socio-political and economic system in the country is unsustainable, that Croatia is decaying and is in a state worse than before the war, as it is constantly exposed to exploitation and discrimination..." (Osobni dosje Veselica Marko 205673, p. 23).

At the end of 1971, the Croatian reformist movement was forcibly ended, and with it the dismissal of reform-oriented Croatian communists at all levels of the state party apparatus, so that most proposals for new policies toward migrant workers were not implemented. Some measures continued to be called for declaratively, but the Yugoslav communist regime's policy toward migrant workers remained unchanged, as evidenced by selected documents from various institutions and levels of government.

### Proposed reforms in Zagreb – Belgrade relations

The first sentence of the document already makes clear the break from the previous policy which tolerated and even indirectly encouraged work migration to Western Europe: "The emigration of our citizens abroad in recent years – given the num-

ber, the social, economic and qualification structure, the motives for emigration, etc.– has become a problem of the first order in our republic (Zaključci Odbora za pitanja vanjske politike i odnosa s inozemstvom Sabora SR Hrvatske, Zagreb, January 1971, p. 1 [hereinafter: Zaključci]). This dramatic description of the problem was based on numerical data, for the number of migrant workers from the SRC has increased rapidly each year since the late 1960 s. For example, in 1967 there were just over 26,000, the following year there were just over 57,000, then in 1969 there were over 123,000, and in 1970 this number reached almost 240,000 (Informacija o aktuelnim pitanjima u oblasti zapošljavanja naših građana u inozemstvu, March, 1972, p. 7).

In the second half of the 1960 s, the reformist group at the head of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), which, among other things, advocated for decentralization of governance and convergence with some Western models in the economy, prevailed over the centralist group, which wanted to preserve Yugoslavia's centralist structure and strong state control over the economy. This became particularly evident after Aleksandar Ranković, a Serbian communist and leader of the centralist group, was stripped of all his posts in 1966. According to historian Zdenko Radelić, the process of decentralization has begun in many areas, and the focus has gradually shifted from the federation to the republics and nations (Radelić, 2008, pp. 360–367). This is clear in the quoted statement of the Committee, which considers the issue of migrant workers from the perspective of the SRC, without placing it in the context of the Yugoslav federation. Various indicators were perfectly clear – the SRC was the republic most affected by the process of this type of emigration which, as the quote says, was indeed a problem of the first order for the SRC. Obviously, it was felt that the federation as a whole was not paying enough attention to it, leaving it to the SRC authorities to solve the problem.

Speaking further about the relationship between Zagreb as republic center and Belgrade as the center of the federation, we must point out that part of the reasons for the mass exodus of SRC residents abroad was sought precisely in the way these relationships were defined. Therefore, many of the Committee's proposals were aimed at changing them. Regarding the need for economic reform, initiated in the mid-1960 s and aimed at solving the difficulties in the economy that were primarily the result of the state-planned economy, the meeting concluded that this reform could not be carried out without radical changes in the monetary, foreign exchange, banking, and foreign trade systems (Zaključci, p. 1). Savka Dabčević-Kučar, president of the Central Committee (CC) of the LCC since 1969 and, together with Miko Tripalo, the leading name of the reformist group at the head of the LCC, and also a doctor of economics, stated in detailed memoirs that economic solutions in Yugoslavia were



often to the disadvantage of the SRC and that Yugoslavia "mainly represents direct economic interests of Serbia" (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, pp. 89–90). Following up on the previous paragraph, it is necessary to convey Dabčević-Kučar's remark that indifference and silence were encountered in economic controversies at the level of the federation (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, pp. 186–187). She openly claims that in some segments a "despoilment of the Croatian economy" was the case (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, p. 191). Moreover, the federation should have been interested in Croatia's further development for many reasons, such as the importance it had for Yugoslavia. However, it had considered it primarily as a source of funds invested and spent in other areas, said Dabčević-Kučar (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, pp. 192–193). With regard to the issues highlighted in the report and some others, such as tariff rates and import duties, Dabčević-Kučar concludes, "Although this was clearly a kind of colonial exploitation – this problem has not been successfully solved" (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, pp. 275).

The importance of the above points from the report for the SRC and its relations with the federation is evidenced by the fact that the centralist structures were desperately trying to stop the changes, so much so that at the 22 nd session of the CC of the LCC in September 1971, Dabčević-Kučar very firmly sought a reform of the banking, foreign trade, and foreign exchange systems. Dissatisfaction with the SRC's position within Yugoslavia was growing inexorably within the extremely heterogeneous Croatian reformist movement. Therefore, the students, losing hope that the reformist communists at the head of the LCC could effectively continue the struggle to improve the Croatian position in Yugoslavia, organized a warning strike and identified their demands with those of Dabčević-Kučar of the 22 nd session (Batović, 2010, p. 203). However, the centralist and bureaucratic forces used the strike to crack down on and violently end the Croatian reformist movement, and the SRC was hit by a wave of arrests, expulsions from the LCC, dismissals, and other forms of repression.

The proposed measures were intended to work in the direction of partially eliminating the causes that led a large number of workers leaving for the so-called "temporary work" from the SRC with the capital that the migrant workers had acquired through their work abroad. They had to be encouraged in their desire to return permanently, which was present in many. In doing so, the authorities had to facilitate their return and give them the opportunity to work as small entrepreneurs or to invest capital in the state or, as it was officially called in the Yugoslav self-government system, the social sector. But such development further undermined state control over the economy and was a thorn in the side of centralists, unitarians, and the bureaucracy, particularly at the federal level.

During the Croatian reformist movement, the discussion of the form and amount of aid from the more developed republics to the less developed came to the fore. Dabčević-Kučar writes about the justification of aid to less developed parts of Yugoslavia, but also about the need for more clearly defined criteria for assessing underdevelopment and how wrong it was to declare the entire republic as developed or underdeveloped. In this context, she points out that Croatia also had underdeveloped regions, but was declared as developed republic and had to allocate significant funds to underdeveloped republics and provinces, which in many cases were spent irrationally. She explains that in the period from 1966 to 1968 alone, the SRC paid 1,360 million new dinars into the fund for the underdeveloped, with a total of 5,021 million dinars paid to the underdeveloped republics (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, pp. 215–216, 222, 224).

Historian Zdenko Radelić writes that the reformist part of the Croatian state party leadership wanted each republic and autonomous province to spend as much money as it made, and opposed the so-called "overflow of funds" in the underdeveloped republics, where they were invested unwisely, leading to even greater investment and dependence on foreign loans. Moreover, this part of the Croatian communists believed that the way the extra-budgetary balance was organized was detrimental to the SRC. Particularly, there was an obligation that part of the foreign exchange that had been generated had to be transferred to the National Bank of Yugoslavia, from where the money was transferred to the underdeveloped republics and provinces. There were many complaints about the work of the federal bank and re-export companies, which were described as power centers working to the detriment of individual republics, including the SRC. According to some indicators, Radelić reports, migrant workers from the SRC earned about a billion dollars in 1969, but due to the existing law, only about one-fifth of that amount came to Croatia. The companies were allowed to keep only 7% of the foreign currency earned, and the rest had to be handed over to Belgrade banks and then bought at a very unfavorable exchange rate. Radelić also writes about what Dabčević-Kučar is talking about – a proposal for financial disempowerment of the federation came from the SRC, but the centralists and representatives of some republics and provinces firmly rejected such a proposal. After all, if the companies and workers they nominally managed had a greater share in the disposal of revenues, it automatically meant that more money would remain in some republics. Dabčević-Kučar presented this as a struggle against unitarism, explaining that this tendency would weaken due to what is called in the communist vocabulary the "denationalization of surplus labor" and due to the growing influence of workers in the disposal of the funds generated. Radelić reports on the data of economist Marko Veselica, who claimed that between 1960 and 1970 SRC received

11% of investments and its share in national income was 27%. In Serbia, this figure was 33% and it received as much as 60% of new investments. To return to the question of investment efficiency in underdeveloped republics: The fact that a worker in the SRC was six times more efficient than in Montenegro, considering earnings per worker and invested funds, speaks volumes. Radelić also claimed that foreign exchange came to Yugoslavia mainly through Croatia, adding that Dabčević-Kučar proved that "part of its (Croatian – author's note) accumulation was constantly spilling over into other Yugoslav republics." Slovenia and Croatia repaid Yugoslav loans from the generated foreign currency spent by other republics and provinces (Radelić, 2008, pp. 413–418).

The data presented by Radelić as well as his interpretations are confirmed in other proposals of the Committee. Thus, a proposal was made to introduce a new system under which foreign exchange would be calculated according to market value. It was pointed out that the current solution caused great dissatisfaction among SRC migrant workers "and leads to the transfer of a large part of foreign exchange to central banks, which has negative political effects" (Zaključci, p. 7). This has also made SRC migrant workers reluctant to exchange their savings in foreign currency in Yugoslav banks. The Committee pointed out that it is necessary to divide the foreign currency funds by republics, according to the amount of foreign currency remittances of the migrant workers from each republic. In this way, a portion would be designated for the common needs of the federation. It was also recommended that commercial banks establish an information service and develop a more effective plan to attract the foreign currency savings of migrant workers from the SRC (Zaključci, p. 7).

There were other conclusions of the Committee that went in the direction of redefining the relations between Zagreb and Belgrade. For example, it was proposed that 1% of the foreign exchange remittances of migrant workers from the SRC available to the federation become an autonomous part of the SRC funds. These funds would be invested in strengthening educational, cultural, and information activities for migrant workers from the SRC. Regarding information activities for migrant workers, the Committee welcomed the process of creating information centers in Europe and urged to speed up the process of establishing an information office in Stuttgart, which would be responsible for the FRG and part of Switzerland. It was pointed out that the highest concentration of SRC migrant workers was located there, so it was necessary to ensure that the staff of that center is from the SRC. In addition, it was pointed out that in diplomatic missions abroad there was an urgent need for high quality staffing that corresponds to the national composition of SRC and Yugoslav migrant workers in a certain area, in terms of diplomatic and consular staff and other personnel (Zaključci, str. 6). The issue of personnel in many state services, from the

organs of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), the administration, the police, the army, as well as diplomatic and consular missions and other missions abroad, was one of the most frequently mentioned topics in numerous debates of the LCC and in public during the existence of the Croatian reformist movement. Indeed, numerous data showed that Croats within the SRC, but also at the level of the federation, were underrepresented in the mentioned services, i.e., their number did not correspond to their share in the population of the SRC and Yugoslavia. The Serbs, together with the Montenegrins, dominated (Radelić, 2008, pp. 393–400). Dabčević-Kučar said in her memoirs that embassies and consulates were dominated by Serbs (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, p. 231). Similar to the staff of various state institutions in the country, the reform-minded leadership of the LCC tried to change this personnel image abroad. However, as with some other institutions—the army, the police, the intelligence services—Belgrade’s centralist circles tried their best to maintain maximum control in this area. In the report, the Committee called for an increase in the number of consulates and their representative offices, especially in the FRG, as the current network and number of staff could not, in its opinion, meet the needs of a growing number of migrant workers. In the event that the analysis showed that there was a lack of staff in a consulate and that federal funds would not allow for further employment, the report suggested that consideration be given to sending qualified staff from the SRC, with funds to be provided from the SRC budget. It was pointed out that the staff that would be appointed to the consulates should be informed as much as possible on the developments in the country and in regular contact with the relevant institutions in the SRC. In this regard, it was said that it was necessary to start the practice of monitoring and maintaining contacts with the SRC staff working in the State Secretariat for Foreign Affairs (SSFA) and diplomatic and consular missions with the relevant institutions in the SRC (Zaključci, p. 6). The solution to the problem of the national composition of staff in diplomatic and other missions went beyond the issue of attitudes toward migrant workers from SRC. The reformist part of the Croatian state party leadership wanted to be more independent in shaping foreign policy. This angered the centralist circles in Belgrade, as the area of foreign policy was seen as one of the cohesive elements of Yugoslavia.

The disproportionate representation of Serbs and Montenegrins in Yugoslav embassies and consulates in a situation where migrant workers from Yugoslavia were dominated by Croats led to a sense of subordination and exclusion among the latter. The behavior of Yugoslav officials abroad, who treated some Croatian labor migrants in a chauvinistic manner, humiliated and harassed them in various ways, and labeled them Ustashas and fascists, contributed to the aggravation of relations. In addition, many cases were forms of persecution because Yugoslav intelligence and diplomatic

services spied on some migrant workers, tried to recruit them for intelligence work, blackmailed them, and threatened them in various other ways (them or their family members in Yugoslavia) (Čizmić et al., 2005, pp. 240, 250; Bukvić, 2021; Otkrio policiji ucjenu Udbe, September – December, 1980, p. 21).

As for the personnel sent abroad by the Yugoslav authorities, migrant workers from the SRC were dissatisfied with the dominance of Serbian personnel and their behavior in embassies, consulates, and other representations as well as with the national composition of teachers sent abroad to conduct supplementary schooling for the children of the migrant workers. Among the Croats who sought work abroad, many who harbored hostility toward the Yugoslav communist regime. The appointment of Serbian teachers, the use of Serbian or the so-called "Eastern variant" of the common Serbian-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian language in complementary schooling, and the dominance of Serbian history and literature in the curriculum were seen as attempts to turn Croatian children into Serbs – precisely what was one of the motives for migration abroad, along with seeking work. Therefore, the Committee warned of the need to provide a sufficient number of teachers for the children of migrant workers abroad, then free textbooks "from the school subjects of the national group," in the languages of the nation and the minorities of migrant workers and their children (Zaključci, p. 4). It should be mentioned that Dabčević-Kučar also pointed out the problem of insistence of Serbian teachers on teaching the Serbian language to children of Croatian migrant workers (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, p. 231).

Thus, the reformist part of the Croatian communist leadership believed that part of the reason for the above-average number of SRC migrant workers in the Yugoslav context was the unfavorable relations between the SRC and the Yugoslav federation. This phenomenon was additionally unfavorable for both the SRC and Yugoslavia because the SRC migrant workers became further alienated from Yugoslavia and adopted an increasingly hostile attitude due to the ethnic composition and behavior of the staff representing Yugoslavia abroad.

### **Proposed reforms in the field of economy**

The Committee identified that a series of weaknesses in the existing economic system represented second group of reasons which were responsible for a large number of migrant workers from the SRC was to be found in. This is evident from the sentence in the first point of the Committee's Conclusions: "This phenomenon (intensive migration of workers abroad – author's note) is closely related to the occurrence of abnormal unemployment in our country and the working and living conditions of workers in our country" (Zaključci, p. 1). It goes on to say that efforts must therefore be aimed at reducing unemployment and creating living conditions

that, with the further development of self-government, will lead to an increase in living standards, reduce the number of people working abroad, and encourage the return of those who have left the country (Zaključci, p. 1). With regard to the economic reform of mid-1960, mentioned earlier, it was said that its implementation had to be a priority. The point was that labor organizations (communist term for enterprises) should be given more rights and that workers should have more control over the use of the money earned by their labor organization. Then it called for consistent application of the principle of sharing wages according to the results achieved and within labor organizations and "between economic sectors, industries, and groups, and economic and non-economic activities at all relations and levels" (Zaključci, p. 2). There were also calls for the introduction of scientific management in self – government, i.e., professionalization of the companies and the abolition of the appointment to leadership roles based on party line. Moreover, a radical change in the structure of the staff in terms of qualifications and continuous training was also requested (Zaključci, p. 2).

Following this, it was stressed that the next five-year plan must be based on the economic reform of mid-1960. Reference was made to the need to bridge the gap between politics and economics, science and practice, the current and the necessary qualification structure of workers, the mismatch between individual production areas and production in general, distribution, turnover, and consumption. It was assumed that this would gradually reduce the deficits that were causing the high unemployment. Development should have focused on "driving industries, capital, and intensive economy" (Zaključci, p. 2). In addition, the development of agriculture and the accompanying so-called "small industry" – within the social sector (i.e. the state sector), but also the so-called "personal" work with their own means and individual entrepreneurship. It was also suggested that future plans should particularly focus on employment policies, setting high incomes and salaries, and the skill structure of workers. What these conclusions tried to convey is that wages must be directly related to the economy and the profitability of companies. Furthermore, the same criteria should have been applied in the field of investment, and migrant workers – returnees – could have helped with the capital earned abroad (Zaključci, p. 2).

Dabčević-Kučar explains that the economic reform was aimed to emphasize the profitability of the economy, the abolition of state subsidies and grants (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, p. 206). And it is precisely this assessment of her that is reflected in the Committee's Conclusions above. In solving the burning economic problems of the country lies the key to solving the mass exodus of migrant workers from the SRC. However, Dabčević-Kučar then cites two facts that show that the reform of the Yugoslav political and economic system could not really be carried out. First, she points

out that the resistance to the reforms, evident from the previous text, was enormous (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, p. 209). Despite the inefficiency and numerous weaknesses of the Yugoslav economy, many structures believed that the reforms would mean a loss of power and influence for them. A strong and numerous social group consisting of bureaucrats, which one of the leading Yugoslav communists, Milovan Djilas, who became a dissident in the mid-1950 s, called the new class, the ruling class characteristic of communist systems, opposed the reforms because for many of them they meant a loss of power, privileges, money, and position (Đilas, 2010). Second, more than twenty years later, Dabčević-Kučar argued that the main reason for the failure of the reform was the impossibility of changes in the economy without the change to a market economy and without the change to a multiparty system (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, p. 211). It should be added that Dabčević-Kučar did not advocate the latter during the Croatian Spring, but advocated the survival of the communist system and the Yugoslav state. Thus, she noted in her autobiography, among other things, that her peers and she based their political actions on "the conviction that both socialism and Yugoslavia could be improved" (Dabčević-Kučar, 1997, p. 122).

From the above, we can conclude the following: the reform-minded part of the LCC leadership believed that in solving the problem of the large number of workers from the SRC who migrated abroad for the so-called "temporary work" it was necessary to eliminate the causes that had led to this, and they saw these in the unfavorable relations between the SRC and the federation and in the current functioning of the economic system. Their policies failed because they were forced to resign and the ideas of the Croatian reformist movement largely did not survive their violent end. However, Dabčević-Kučar's statement, although made twenty years later, speaks volumes about the real possibilities of radical reform according to the proposed recipe. In her opinion, the Yugoslav communist system could not be reformed – the only way out of the difficult economic situation, which resulted, among other things, in a mass exodus of workers, was to leave the communist system, both economically and politically.

With the violent collapse of the Croatian reformed movement, the belief of tens of thousands of Croats in Yugoslav state unity and the belief that the Yugoslav state was the optimal solution for the interests of the Croatian nation also collapsed. Although the fruits of the Croatian reformed movement became visible in the 1974 Yugoslav constitution, which assigned Yugoslavia some confederal features, the efforts of the Croatian reformist communists to redefine the relationship between the SRC and the federation were in many ways thwarted by the collapse of the Croatian reformist movement. This led many former supporters of the Yugoslav state among Croats to conclude that an independent Croatian state was the only option that



opened a way out of the difficult economic situation, but also the free development of a number of Croatian identity characteristics. In accordance with the above, for these people only the independent and democratic Croatian state was a form that could tackle the causes of the huge wave of emigrants that began in the early 1960s and grew to enormous proportions.

In its Conclusions, the Committee did not confine itself to general recommendations, but made a number of specific suggestions about what needs to be changed in the economy to effectively address the problem of large numbers of migrant workers. Much attention was given to the goal of encouraging migrant workers to return permanently by facilitating investment in the SRC. Thus, the proposal of the SRC Executive Council of Parliament (ECP) to exempt from customs duties "work tools and various equipment for business premises" imported by migrant workers upon their return from abroad was supported, provided that they are used for "personal" work or individual entrepreneurship for at least two years. Another proposal of the ECP of the SRC was supported, a proposal regarding the part of the foreign exchange from the remittances of the migrant workers from the SRC to be invested in local areas from which they came, and that they should be allowed to invest in social (i.e., state) run institutions in exchange for a fee and job insurance upon their return. It was suggested to consider whether it is necessary to pass a law that stipulates that part of the savings of migrant workers from the SRC must be given as loans to labor organizations, banks, but also to socio-political communities (communist term for local government institutions). The latter were to use these funds for the development of the underdeveloped parts of the SRC from which most of the migrant workers came. Another idea to be considered was the possibility of using part of the foreign exchange for the development of craft cooperatives and the like. These funds could be used to purchase equipment from abroad for the modernization of handicraft enterprises or to build smaller industrial plants from the so-called "small industry," especially in underdeveloped communities. The Committee supported the banking association's initiative, which was in the direction of developing a credit system for housing construction based on foreign exchange savings and deposits abroad by migrant workers from the SRC. It was also felt that this idea should be extended to the construction of workshops, businesses providing various services, various other business premises, and generally anything that could create jobs (Zaključci, pp. 6–7).

Several of the Committee's proposals also related to the local level of government, thus demonstrating that the Committee's work strived to be more comprehensive and thoughtful. For example, it recommended that "municipal assemblies simplify the procedure for obtaining urban planning documents and make building policies in general more flexible" (Zaključci, p. 8). In urban plans, municipalities



were to find places where they could build housing for the workers returning from abroad, as well as spaces for the expansion of artisanal activities, to be built with the savings of the returnees. This was highlighted as a particularly important recommendation because a significant number of migrant workers were saving and investing their savings in housing. In this context, there was a national call to accelerate the development of housing stabilization plan. Municipal governments were recommended to reduce their own participation in the sales tax. They were also given a recommendation to "simplify the rules and procedures for issuing permits for work with personal funds or in individual entrepreneurship, with special emphasis on service activities and the so-called small industry" (Zaključci, p. 9). It was furthermore said that all municipal governments, labor organizations, and socio-political communities should include employment plans in the development plans, which includes planning of personnel structure, salary policies, conditions of personal and social standards (Zaključci, p. 9).

These proposals also reflect the efforts of the SRC authorities to initiate the permanent return of a greater number of migrant workers by facilitating the investment of earned funds, primarily through the simplification of numerous rules and regulations. Migrant workers were no longer seen exclusively as a means of simply obtaining foreign exchange, as federal administration which benefited greatly from the foreign exchange of the migrant workers has perceived them, but as investors, thousands and tens of thousands of small engines that would promote development of the SRC and particularly its underdeveloped parts, where most of the workers came from. In this vision, migrant workers could partially compensate for the lack of federal investment in the SRC and fill the financial gap left by the withdrawal of money from the SRC.

The character of the recommendations for the SRC level was formulated in the same tone. The Committee's Conclusions also state that the possibility of adopting an ordinance providing tax relief for the sale of construction and reproduction materials and tools should be explored. The ordinance was supposed to enable small commodity producers to purchase raw materials from wholesalers on the same terms as socialist enterprises. It was also proposed that funds from revenues invested in improving economic and other tertiary activities be exempt from "tax intervention" for at least the first two years. Furthermore, the adoption of a law on "personal" work of citizens and the possibility of increasing the number of employees in the private sector, i. e., self-governing terms called "individual entrepreneurship" were considered. The need for constant monitoring of the phenomenon of employment and unemployment, as well as economic migration, in which the republics and municipalities should have the leading word, was pointed out. One of the more significant points

in these proposals was the suggestion to consider the possibility of participation of migrant workers in electoral processes. It was noted that if they were denied the right to vote and stand for election, they would perceive it as a "write-off," which "could have far-reaching political consequences" (Zaključci, pp. 8–9).

### **Proposed reforms to protect and improve the position of SRC migrant workers abroad**

The third group of the Committee's proposals related to the various improvements in the situation of SRC migrant workers abroad. Thus, the Conclusions state that it is necessary to oppose unacceptable forms of employment of workers abroad that would disadvantage them. It was recommended to the specialized services both in the republic and in the federation to review the existing international agreements defining the position of SRC migrant workers in each country to see if there is a possibility for better protection and working conditions. One of the more concrete measures would be a ban on negotiating hourly rates of less than four Deutschmarks gross. SRC authorities wanted to limit the migration of certain populations abroad, seeing this as a particularly severe demographic and economic blow. Mothers with two or more children and skilled and highly skilled workers invited individually by foreign employers were considered as such. The Committee was aware of the depth of the problem of mass migration of workers from the SRC to foreign countries and, consequently, that this issue would not disappear anytime soon. It was realistically predicted that the past trend of mass emigration would continue for some time, but migrant workers needed to be better prepared in several ways before they went abroad. For example, they should be introduced to the basic language concepts that would be used in the work they will be doing and provided with a language manual that contains basic concepts necessary for them to function normally abroad. Furthermore, they would need to be familiarized with basic information about the country they are going to and advise them to join unions and similar organizations. An interpreter should be allocated per a larger group of migrant workers who would work at a particular company and would be paid by that company. He or she should be familiar with labor and social legislation issues of that country. As an urgent measure, it is suggested to increase the number of social workers who know the language of the country to which they are sent and who are familiar with the laws pertaining to the situation of migrant workers (Zaključci, pp. 3–5).

As part of the general decentralization, it was also proposed to decentralize the service for sending workers abroad, in which the republics and municipalities should play the main role, while maintaining coordination at the federal level. In

addition, the municipalities were to become instances to monitor the course of immigration and emigration in their territories. Moreover, it was suggested that experts should be appointed in social and health institutions for social, health, and child protection of migrant workers. The SRC union was recommended to send its own representatives to the provincial organizations, particularly to the German unions, and representatives to the union branches in each enterprise where a large number of SRC migrant workers worked. The establishment of special centers to assist migrant workers, giving them advice, instructions, and the like, should also be considered. Finally, he said, it is necessary to support the work of all institutions that really help migrant workers – associations for social, cultural, and sports life, as well as charitable and religious institutions, provided they are loyal to Yugoslavia. At one point in the report, a remark is made about cooperation with religious communities, referring primarily to the Catholic Church. The remark was enhanced by proposing the elaboration of cooperation with the humanitarian institutions of the Church and flexibility towards the work of some Church missions in countries where there were a large number of migrant workers from the SRC (Zaključci, pp. 3–5).

## Epilogue

However, the further mass exodus of migrant workers from Yugoslavia was halted, not because of the consolidation of the Yugoslav economy and the general improvement of working and living conditions, but because of the crisis that hit the Western European countries which were the most frequent destination of the migrant workers. The crisis erupted in the fall of 1973 with a sharp increase in oil prices, which led, among other things, to a radical decrease in the demand for foreign labor and even to their partial dismissal. To illustrate, in the first nine months of 1974, the number of migrant workers leaving Yugoslavia for Western Europe fell by as much as 85% compared to 1973. Thus, already in 1974, the number of Yugoslav citizens working and residing in Western Europe stabilized at about 1.1 million (workers and their family members) (Informacija o kretanjima i očekivanjima na planu zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih građana u inostranstvu i o kretanju zaposlenosti u zemlji u periodu I-IX 1974. godine, December 25, 1974, p. 2–3). Despite its stated commitment to encourage the mass return of migrant workers, Yugoslavia lacked the capacity to take them in or provide them with jobs, let alone to offer the salaries and working conditions they had enjoyed in Western Europe. In fact, Yugoslavia was only interested in the return of a small number of people – skilled workers and highly qualified professionals, as well as people who had acquired special military skills and knowledge through military service, i.e., a certain rank (Informacija o kretanjima i očekivanjima na planu zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih građana u inos-

transtvu i o kretanju zaposlenosti u zemlji u periodu I-IX 1974. godine, December 25, 1974, p. 3–4).

The new situation in Western Europe reduced the number of Yugoslav migrant workers. In 1973 it peaked at about 905,000, and in 1984 there were an estimated 600,000 Yugoslav citizens working in Western Europe. The difference between the two figures is due to the fact that the number of emigrants to Western Europe has declined radically since the end of 1973, and a number of migrant workers who had been employed in Yugoslavia have returned (some have since retired or died). However, this return was primarily due to the repressive factor in Western European countries, i.e., job loss and other negative circumstances (e.g., growing xenophobia), rather than to attractive factors in Yugoslavia. This assertion is supported by the fact that many migrant workers who kept their jobs, advanced in their careers, acquired some capital, and climbed the social ladder in the country of immigration were headed for permanent residence in Western Europe. Indeed, since the mid-1970 s, an intensification of the emigration process of family members of migrant workers (mainly spouses and children) was recorded. While this number was about 235,000 in 1973, it increased to over 400,000 in 1984 (Politički, ekonomski i bezbednosni aspekti boravka naših radnika na radu u inostranstvu u uslovima pogoršane međunarodne situacije i ekonomske krize, October 10, 1984, p. 7). According to the 1981 census, there were 874,968 persons in Yugoslavia who were engaged in the so-called "temporary work" and resided abroad – workers with family members. Of these, 210,330 or 24% were from the SRC, 203,421 or 23.2% from Serbia proper, 65,591 or 7.5% from Autonomous province of Vojvodina, 39,434 or 4.5% from Autonomous province of Kosovo, 182,940 or 20.9% from SR B&H, etc. Of the above number of SRC residents abroad, 151,619 were workers and 58,711 were family members (Statistički godišnjak Jugoslavije 1986., 1986, p. 447). The same list registered 97,338 returnees in the SRC (Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 1981. Radnici na privremenom radu u inozemstvu, članovi porodice i povratnici, 1983, p. 76).

The dominant influence of push factors in Western Europe is also evident from the fact that reflows were strongest in the years following the onset of the crisis and then they slowed down. For example, it was estimated that about 677,000 migrant workers from Yugoslavia were in Western Europe at the beginning of 1981 (Baučić, 1985 a, p. 9). As noted earlier, this figure was about 600,000 in 1984, and the slow-down in the flow of returnees in the early 1980 s is also indicated by the fact that the number of returnees was about 40,000 in 1980, about 35,000 in 1981, and about 30,000 migrant workers in 1982. The mid-1983 forecast for a further relationship between emigration and return flows strongly confirms the thesis that the situation in Western Europe had a stronger influence on this phenomenon than in Yugoslavia:

”The unprecedented rise in unemployment in almost all Western European countries, and especially the drastic increase in unemployment in the Federal Republic of Germany, where a large number of our citizens are working temporarily, will, however, undeniably increase the return flows despite the difficult economic situation in the country” (Bilten Koordinacionog odbora RK SSRNH za naše građane u inozemstvu, May – June, 1983, p. 5).

Yugoslav regime found itself in a paradoxical position – while nominally remaining committed to the policy of mass return of migrant workers, repeated at various meetings of state and party officials, in reality it did not have the capacity to employ all the migrant workers who needed to return to Yugoslavia from Western Europe. In 1981, 2,932 migrant workers registered with the SRC's employment service; in 1982, the number was 2,659. Although almost half of them were able to find employment in 1982, at the end of the year there were 4,641 registered unemployed migrant workers who returned. It was stated that the reason for this development was the low employability of workers returning from abroad. Of those who returned in 1981, over 71% belonged to the category of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, i.e., those with lower education. In addition, the aforementioned group included 40% of those who had reached the age of 40, as well as many women, and these two categories were also considered more difficult to employ. In relation to women, of the 4,641 unemployed returnees in late 1982 as mentioned above, 2,255 were women. Finally, of the 4,641 unemployed returnees, 22.5% were difficult to employ for other reasons such as health problems (Radnici povratnici iz inozemstva na evidencijama SIZ-ova za zapošljavanje u SR Hrvatskoj, Zagreb, June, 1983, p. 1-2, 12). The data presented not only confirm the first sentence of this paragraph, but also support the thesis that the migrant workers who could not keep their jobs in Western Europe clearly dominated in the structure of returnees.

An analysis by a group of scholars from the Center for Migration and Ethnic Studies in Zagreb, written in the mid-1980 s, states the following on the above subject and in the context of migration in Europe and the world: ”Moreover, return migration proves to be a selective process, again unfavorable for the country of emigration, which shows that it is not enough to insist only on return as such. Experience shows for all emigration countries that most returnees are older, less educated, in poorer health, and more affected by personal problems than the average migrant. In contrast, migrants who have obtained good employment and qualifications and who have succeeded in overcoming many obstacles that life in an immigrant society brings with it do not tend to return” (Mesić et al., 1983, pp. 12–13). Ivo Baučić, one of the Croatian scholars who has worked particularly hard on the issue of labor migration, estimated in a mid-1980 s analysis that of the approximately 830,000 adult

Yugoslav citizens in Western Europe (the estimate was based on about 690,000 Yugoslav citizens working in Western Europe with about 400,000 dependent family members living there, including about 140,000 adults and about 260,000 children), about 35% would remain permanently in their current countries of residence (Baučić, 1985 b, p. 2–3).

A much more pessimistic forecast was given by the Secretary of the Central Committee of the LCC Milutin Baltić at the joint meeting of the Republic Council for International Relations and the Republic Council for the Protection of the Constitutional Order, which took place at the end of April 1979 and whose theme was *Current problems of our citizens, including the problems of social self-protection*. Namely, he said that he believed "that a large number of people will not return." He added that the Yugoslav clubs in Western Europe gather mainly "those who are at least psychologically connected with the idea of return, and even they are no longer willing to return" (Sjednica Republičkog savjeta za međunarodne odnose i Republičkog savjeta za zaštitu ustavnog poretka, April 24, 1979, p. 162). According to the same meeting, only between ten and fourteen percent of migrant workers in Western Europe met and engaged in various social, cultural, and sports activities in Yugoslav clubs (Sjednica Republičkog savjeta za međunarodne odnose i Republičkog savjeta za zaštitu ustavnog poretka, April 24, 1979, p. 189). Baltić's position is also reflected in a document prepared based on a discussion held at the meeting, which states, "It is estimated that a larger number of citizens currently abroad will not return" (Sjednica Republičkog savjeta za međunarodne odnose i Republičkog savjeta za zaštitu ustavnog poretka, April 24, 1979, p. 225).

The theses presented are confirmed by data from local communities. Like the SRC, the Community of Bjelovar municipalities has experienced a change in the number and structure of migrant workers. From this area (it included the former municipalities of Bjelovar, Čazma, Daruvar, Đurđevac, Garešnica, Grubišno Polje, Koprivnica, Križevci, Pakrac and Virovitica), according to the 1971 census, there were 19,591 people due to "temporary work" abroad – workers with family members. Moreover, this area had 389,906 inhabitants in 1971, which means that out of the total population of the Community of the Bjelovar municipalities, 5% lived abroad. As in the case of the entire SRC, this was the most vital part of the population. Until the next census in 1981, the number of inhabitants in the territory of the Community of the Bjelovar municipalities decreased to 370,916 or 4.9%. According to the census, there were 16,022 people due to "temporary work" abroad – 11,807 workers and 4,215 family members. The demographic impact of the so-called "temporary work" abroad on the region is shown by the fact that out of this number 962 people were born abroad (Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 1981. Stano-

vništvo po naseljima, općinama i zajednicama općina, 1984, pp. 12–13; Popis stanovništva 1971. i 1981., 1989, pp. 12, 92). The number of family members of migrant workers in the previous census was twice as lower (Informacija o proteklim Zimskim kontaktima s našim građanima na privremenom radu u inozemstvu na području Zajednice općina Bjelovar 1982/83, January 17, 1983, p. 1). In addition, the 1981 census recorded 610 returnees from the so-called "temporary" work abroad, 349 of whom had their own income upon arrival, including 299 retirees (Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova 1981. Radnici na privremenom radu u inozemstvu, članovi porodice i povratnici, 1983, p. 76).

Although the 1980 s saw repatriations, largely due to push factors in Western Europe, by the second half of the 1980 s local authorities lost any hope, or rather illusion, that they could persuade migrant workers to return permanently, as the following sentences show: "There is less and less interest in employment. Indeed, those who have remained abroad until now are trying to extend their stay as much as possible in order to meet the requirements for retirement. The few who want to come back and work in the country are looking for jobs similar to those abroad and, of course, a similar personal income, which is impossible to achieve, so they stay abroad" (Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Hrvatske. Općinska konferencija Bjelovar, January 27, 1986, p. 2).

The transcript of the joint meeting of the Republic Council for International Relations and the Republic Council for the Protection of the Constitutional Order is another important document that undeniably indicates that no changes were made in Croatia or Yugoslavia in the 1970 s that, without strong push factors in Western European countries, would lead to a mass return of migrant workers and stop the emigration of family members of migrant workers who actually remained abroad permanently. The opportunity for the permanent return of some migrant workers was still seen in the limited development of the private sector, the so-called "small economy". There was a legal framework for the latter, but the lack of definition, the high level of bureaucracy, the lack of a strategic, comprehensive approach to the problem, and the lack of concrete incentives for return (tax breaks for returnees, customs exemption for goods used in production, lack of favorable credit, lack of measures to encourage savings, etc.) created a harsh reality that discouraged potential returnees (Sjednica Republičkog savjeta za međunarodne odnose i Republičkog savjeta za zaštitu ustavnog poretka, April 24, 1979, pp. 138–142, 144–148, 157–160, 162, 182, 191, 206). Also, what can be noticed in some appearances, especially the previously mentioned Baltić, was the struggle between the introduction and implementation of some reforms and the simultaneous maintenance of the dominance of the state and thus of LC over the economy and society. This can be seen, for exam-



ple, in Baltić's words that people only tell them that they need money, investments, a different tax policy, and no one mentions the issues of the social system (Baltić refers to the state system, so, socialism) and its strengthening (Sjednica Republičkog savjeta za međunarodne odnose i Republičkog savjeta za zaštitu ustavnog poretka, April 24, 1979, p. 162).

The data from the Bjelovar region confirm the thesis that some measures for the local level proposed by the reform group in the Croatian state party leadership in the early 1970 s, and which continued to be advocated even after the collapse of the Croatian reformist movement, as shown by the document consulted in the previous section, were not implemented. The analysis from early 1983 states the following: "The Committee (Committee for Issues of Temporary Workers Abroad of the Conference of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Croatia of Community of Bjelovar municipalities – op. Cit.) in the further discussion emphasized the importance of the small economy and service activities for the employment of returnees, because it was estimated that the small economy could employ almost as many workers as return annually from abroad. However, the small economy is not developing at the desired pace because municipalities and labor organizations do not have elaborate programs for its development." (Informacija o proteklim Zimskim kontaktima s našim građanima na privremenom radu u inozemstvu na području Zajednice općina Bjelovar 1982/83, January 17, 1983, p. 1). There were no changes in the latter issue in the following years either (Informacija o aktivnostima i raznim oblicima kontakata s našim građanima na privremenom radu u inozemstvu sa područja Zajednice općina Bjelovar, January 1984, p. 6). Further information from the documents prepared by the local authorities of the Community of Bjelovar municipalities shows that some other weaknesses pointed out in the Conclusions of the Parliamentary Foreign Policy and External Relations Committee from the end of late 1970 were not remedied. For example, the latter document pointed out the need to monitor the phenomenon of employment and unemployment as well as economic emigration at the republic and municipal levels. On the other hand, the January 1984 document emphasized the need to involve various local institutions in the Community of Bjelovar municipalities in the analysis of migration processes, which should serve as a basis for defining a policy toward migrant workers, especially a policy that encourages return (Informacija o aktivnostima i raznim oblicima kontakata s našim građanima na privremenom radu u inozemstvu sa područja Zajednice općina Bjelovar, January 1984, p. 6). And although at the end of 1970 a simplification of many procedures related to the acquisition of land and the establishment of businesses was proposed, a document from the end of 1982 speaks not only of numerous bureaucratic obstacles, but also that "in some areas there was a lack of understanding toward returnees when they



offered saved funds for the creation of jobs, when they applied for a location to open stores, when they sought various documents, etc. ” (Skraćeni zapisnik sa sjednice Odbora Konferencije SSRNH Zajednice općina Bjelovar, za pitanja radnika na privremenom radu u inozemstvu, održane 13. 12. 1982. g., December 16, 1982, p. 2). Resistance to reforms that went hand in hand with their declaratory invocation thus existed at the Croatian national level, as Milutin Baltić’s 1979 position shows, but also at the local level, as this example from the Bjelovar region shows.

The attitude of much of Yugoslav diplomacy toward Croatian migrant workers has not changed. At the 1979 meeting, some politicians in the Croatian state party leadership spoke very openly about the problem of underrepresentation of Croatian employees in the diplomatic service and disagreed with the actions of Yugoslav missions and officials who disparaged and discredited Croatian migrant workers as nationalists and fascists, often advocating Yugoslav-Unitarian or Greater Serbian positions. Obviously, the political will to deal with this was not strong enough, i.e., there was strong resistance to significant changes both within the SRC and the federal administration. It is not unusual, therefore, that the meeting found that the Catholic Church from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had a far greater influence on Croatian migrant workers, as the priests and Catholic missions provided numerous services that Croats abroad could not obtain from the Yugoslav embassies and consulates, from representing their interests before the authorities of Western European countries, to charitable, cultural, and social work, to teaching and caring for their children. Similar to the previously analyzed Conclusions of the Parliamentary Foreign Policy and External Relations Committee, prepared ten years before this meeting, the need for some cooperation with Croatian priests, generally loyal to Yugoslavia, was discussed (Sjednica Republičkog savjeta za međunarodne odnose i Republičkog savjeta za zaštitu ustavnog poretka, April 24, 1979, pp. 148, 163–169, 176–178, 183–184, 187–190, 197, 226). However, this recommendation remained unimplemented because the Yugoslav communist regime considered the Catholic Church in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as the most dangerous ideological opponent until the end of its existence.

One of the most revealing pieces of information illustrating the extent of the Yugoslav authorities’ neglect and suppression of Croatian language, culture and history in the context of supplementary schooling for children of Croatian migrant workers is an excerpt from the report of a collaborator (this term refers to the type of informant) with the code name ”Forum” who worked for the SRC State Security Service Center in Split. ”Forum” was in fact the linguist Dalibor Brozović, who kept contact with leading Croatian dissidents such as Vlado Gotovac, Franjo Tuđman, and Marko Veselica, but also with Croatian political emigrants. He often traveled

abroad because he gave various lectures, participated in scientific conferences and the like. On the occasion of the International Labor Day in 1981, he gave a lecture in Augsburg on the Croatian language for Croats who lived in the city and its vicinity. Among other things, he gave impressions about the people who attended the lecture and spoke with him, and this is the most important excerpt:

”Some of these young people work in schools for students of our guest workers, and if only a quarter of what they say is true, then someone in this country of ours is stupid to tolerate it (so thinks the collaborator). In fact, his hosts flooded him with the information that in Augsburg and its surroundings, and even further in FR Germany, there is the largest number of our workers from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Accordingly, the largest number of children come from these two republics. However, the teachers in the schools in over 70% of the cases are from FR Serbia, who then use violence against the children’s language and correct their Ijekavian pronunciation to Ekavian in all situations. Because of this treatment, children and parents are frustrated, hurt and uncompromisingly poisoned. All this together has a depressing effect on the people, because they perceive the whole activity of the Yugoslav authorities in the country and the consulate as anti-Croatian orientation.”

This assessment was given by a long-term and extremely useful collaborator of the SRC State Security Service, as well as an intellectual and linguist. His qualifications, as well as his assessment, speak best in favor of the need of the SRC Parliamentary Foreign Policy and External Relations Committee to try to change something in this regard in accordance with the reform policy of the LCC leadership, but also in relation to a claim that from the proposals in the Committee’s Conclusions to the mentioned 1979 meeting of the Republic Council for International Relations and the Republic Council for the Protection of the Constitutional Order very little changed.

A sentence from the 1974 analysis of the new situation in the employment of migrant workers in Western Europe can serve as a kind of summary of this chapter, but also of the whole paper. It says: ”There are still ideas and expectations that employment abroad can solve the problems of insufficient employment at home, labor reserves, balance of payments deficits, etc.” (*Informacija o kretanjima i očekivanjima na planu zapošljavanja jugoslovenskih građana u inostranstvu i o kretanju zaposlenosti u zemlji u periodu I-IX 1974. godine*, December 25, 1974, p. 16). As this treatise shows, the issue was not ”ideas and expectations” of individuals or groups of individuals, but rather the prevailing state policy. This was due to the reluctance and inability of the authorities to make the necessary changes, as this process would lead to a radical weakening of the control and influence of the LCY and easily to the complete collapse of the communist system.

## Conclusion

The Yugoslav communist regime benefited greatly from migrant workers, but the phenomenon also had many unpleasant and negative consequences for Yugoslavia. Thus, in addition to meeting a significant part of the foreign exchange needs and the influx of new knowledge, work habits and various products from the West, the Yugoslav communist regime had to cope with the fact that hundreds of thousands of workers had to leave the "workers' state" in search of work and better living conditions, then with large demographic losses in some areas, growing labor shortages in certain sectors, and the possibility that migrant workers became a bridge between the anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist political emigration from Yugoslavia and the actual and potential opponents of the Yugoslav regime in the country.

Compared to other republics, autonomous provinces, and nations in Yugoslavia, the Socialist Republic of Croatia and Croats as a whole had an above-average representation in the structure of migrant workers in the first fifteen years since the beginning of the search for work in Western Europe. This was partly due to the fact that the Yugoslav communist regime had a number of opponents among the members of the Croatian nation and that some of the people who went into so-called "temporary work" were motivated to leave not only for economic but also for political reasons. The treatment of many Croatian migrant workers by the regime through the Serb-dominated diplomatic missions, which often regarded all Croats as Ustasha and fascists, or in the supplementary schooling where the majority of teachers were Serbs and insisted on using the so-called Serbian variant of the "Serbo-Croatian" or "Croatian-Serbian" language, further angered many Croats abroad. This was also helped by the fact that the Catholic Church from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was, in various ways, much more effective in advocating for Croatian migrant workers than the Yugoslav missions.

The reform-minded Croatian communists wanted to put an end to this situation in the early 1970 s, when the Croatian reformist movement existed, which was reflected in the Conclusions of the SRC's Parliamentary Foreign Policy and External Relations Committee. This group within the LCC believed that a large part of the migrant workers from the SRC would be lost to the SRC forever if the unitarian and often chauvinistic practices of the Yugoslav foreign missions continued. In addition, this faction of Croatian communists wanted to implement far-reaching administrative and economic reforms that would lead to greater independence of the SRC from Belgrade and the introduction of market elements in the Yugoslav socialist system. They believed that Zagreb's subordination to Belgrade in many areas and the state planned economy forced a large number of Croats to seek work and better working and living conditions in the West and prevented their permanent return. Thus,

radical reforms had to stop the huge wave of workers leaving the SRC for so-called "temporary" work abroad, but also to affect permanent return of at least some of those who had left. It was believed that these people, with their knowledge, experience, and capital acquired in Western European countries, could become thousands and tens of thousands of small engines that would give new strength to the faltering Croatian and Yugoslav economies. Therefore, it is envisaged that a series of measures would further facilitate the return of these people and encourage them to invest. However, the Croatian reformist movement was brought to a violent end in late 1971, and leading Croatian reformers were forced to resign.

By the mid-1970 s, however, the further massive increase in the migrant worker population came to a halt, not because the general situation in Yugoslavia had improved significantly, but because of the crisis in the Western European economies, which no longer needed a huge imported labor force. Despite public announcements that they would work for the mass return of migrant workers, and despite numerous repetitions of such statements on the meetings in the highest state-party institutions, such a scenario was not in the interest of the Yugoslav authorities. Indeed, the implementation of political, social, and economic reforms that would encourage the permanent return of some migrant workers, who were not forced to return because of push factors in Western Europe inevitably meant giving up some of the control and influence at all levels of government of the Yugoslav communist regime, which they were not willing to do. Furthermore, chauvinistic behavior of the representatives of the Yugoslav authorities in Western Europe towards some Croatian migrant workers continued, so that this factor also influenced their decision about a possible return, that is, about the continuation of any ties to Yugoslavia.

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## Zaustaviti masovni egzodus: smjernice reformnoga dijela hrvatskoga državno-partijskog vodstva za politiku prema radnim migrantima u Zapadnoj Europi iz Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske

### Sažetak

U ovome radu predstavljene su temeljne smjernice reformnoga dijela hrvatskoga državno-partijskog vodstva s početka 1970-ih godina za odnos prema rastućemu broju radnih migranata iz Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske (SRH) u Zapadnoj Europi. Također, u kontekstu tih nastojanja analizirane su spomenute struje unutar Saveza komunista Hrvatske (SKH), koje su išle u pravcu širenja autonomije SRH unutar Jugoslavije, ograničenja uvođenja tržišnih mehanizama u jugoslavensko gospodarstvo i dokidanja obrazaca djelovanja i ponašanja državno-partijskih dužnosnika, koji su imali temelj u jugoslavenskome unitarizmu ili pak velikospstvu. Zbog nasilna okončanja reformnoga pokreta, u Hrvatskoj nije došlo ni do pokušaja provođenja dijela zamišljenih politika, no jedan se dio nastavio zagovarati, ali bez stvarne želje i mogućnosti za provođenje. U članku je za potrebe usporedbe na temelju izabranih dokumenata iz druge polovice 1970-ih i 1980-ih godina ilustriran odnos jugoslavenskoga komunističkog režima prema radnim migrantima, posebice onima iz Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske, kao i glavne karakteristike iseljeničko-povratničkih tijekova u populaciji radnih migranata na relaciji Jugoslavija – Zapadna Europa. U tome je razdoblju ipak došlo do zaustavljanja daljnjega masovnog iseljavanja, pa i povrata dijela radnih migranata, čemu je težio reformni dio hrvatskoga državno-partijskog vodstva, ali prvenstveno zbog potisnih faktora u Zapadnoj Europi. S druge strane onim radnim migrantima kojima je pošlo za rukom zadržati/dobiti posao u krizi zahvaćenoj Zapadnoj Europi pridružili su se članovi obitelji, čime su radikalno smanjene šanse za njihov povratak. Jugoslavenske su vlasti u javnosti, kao



i njihovi dužnosnici, na raznim zatvorenim sastancima tvrdili kako su posvećeni povratku radnih migranata, dok je režim imao velike teškoće u zapošljavanju čak i onih koji su bili prisiljeni na povratak. Također, kao i tijekom 1960-ih i početkom 1970-ih, radni migranti hrvatske nacionalnosti i dalje su bili izloženi maltretiranju, ponižavanju i negiranju elemenata nacionalnoga identiteta, što su provodili jugoslavenski diplomatski, konzularni i drugi dužnosnici u inozemstvu.

**Ključne riječi:** hrvatski reformni pokret; Socijalistička Republika Hrvatska; radni migranti; Savka Dabčević-Kučar; Katolička crkva; Zajednica općina Bjelovar.

Doc. dr. sc. Wolly Krašić  
Fakultet hrvatskih studija Sveučilišta u Zagrebu  
Borongajska cesta 83 d  
HR – 10000 Zagreb  
wkrasic@hrstud.hr