



Emigration Policies and Nation-building in Interwar Yugoslavia

European History Quarterly
42(4) 602–627

© The Author(s) 2012

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0265691412458399

ehq.sagepub.com



Ulf Brunnbauer

Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, University of Regensburg, Germany

Abstract

This article analyses the connection between emigration policies and nationalism in interwar Yugoslavia (1918–1941). It argues that Yugoslav policymakers used emigration as a means of nation-building. On the one hand, the Yugoslav state pursued long-distance nation-building by aiming to create a ‘Yugoslav diaspora’ out of the hundreds of thousands of overseas emigrants of South Slavic extraction who had left territories that in 1918 became part of Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the state pursued an ethnically differentiated exit policy. To this end, the emigration of minorities was supported, particularly in the case of non-Slavic Muslims, while the emigration of so-called ‘national’ elements was restricted. In order to assess the efficacy of these policies, the article also looks at the legal and institutional framework within which migration policies were carried out. It concludes that, while the policies’ effects did not correspond with policymakers’ intentions, emigration policy nevertheless provides an original perspective on nation-building in interwar Yugoslavia.

Keywords

diaspora, emigration, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, migration policies, minorities, nation building, nationalism

Introduction

On 4 March 1929 the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes’ (SHS) ambassador to Argentina sent a query to the Kingdom’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His message concerned the repatriation of immigrants who held SHS

Corresponding author:

Prof. Dr Ulf Brunnbauer, Geschäftsführender Direktor, Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung (IOS), Landshuter Str. 4, D-93047 Regensburg, Germany.

Email: Ulf.Brunnbauer@geschichte.uni-regensburg.de

citizenship but were of Magyar or German ethnicity and had requested return permits:

Since these people had left our Kingdom dissatisfied with the new conditions, and because they represent an alien ethnic element which is of no use to our national state – on the contrary, according to the embassy's opinion it should be in our interest that there are as few of these people as possible, especially in the border areas – the embassy kindly requests instructions from the Ministry as to whether the return of these people is opportune.¹

On 10 August 1929, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent its reply:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honour of informing the Royal Embassy that requests for repatriation to the Kingdom by our citizens of Magyar and German nationality should be dismissed under whatever pretext. The return of these a-national elements to our country must be obstructed to the furthest extent possible.²

This exchange illustrates the close connection between emigration policies and nation-building in interwar Yugoslavia.³ This article analyses the conceptual links between emigration and nation-building that were made by Yugoslav policy-makers, and the political measures they took in order to render emigration useful for the nation. I argue that emigration policies were part of the intense, controversial and multi-dimensional efforts to integrate the 'Yugoslav' nation after the creation of a Yugoslav state in 1918.

The national rationale of emigration policies is particularly evident in the contrast between official attitudes towards members of the titular South Slavic nation on the one hand, and members of the non-Slavic minority groups on the other. From a more general perspective, emigration policies were connected to the political elite's interest in territorializing the national body in a new state. Both emigration and the existence of minorities in the country were seen by policymakers as Habsburg and Ottoman legacies, which the new national state had to deal with. At the same time, the government imagined the nation in a trans-territorial way. Emigrants who were considered to be of 'Yugoslav' extraction were to be turned into a Yugoslav diaspora by policies of long-distance nation-building; they were conceived as dislocated members of the nation. Yugoslavia's interwar emigration policies, therefore, show that diaspora as a category of practice can be the intended product of transnational policies put in place by a nation-building state. In the case of interwar Yugoslavia, in other words, it was not so much an *émigré* population that imagined itself a 'homeland', but a homeland that imagined itself a 'diaspora'.

States, Nations, Emigration

Yugoslavia's efforts to regulate emigration in a way that would 'strengthen' the nation were by no means idiosyncratic. Recent literature on emigration policy

stresses the idea that concepts of the nation are revealed not only in the treatment of immigrants, but also in the way that departing citizens are treated. Nancy Green and François Weil accentuate this connection by arguing that ‘Defining emigrants was . . . part of a larger process of defining citizens (and their obligations), national character, as well as the notion of a cultural nation’.⁴

Nation states aim to establish sovereign power over a clearly demarcated territory and its population. Their legitimacy comes from the notion that all citizens hold equal membership in a collective called the nation. Emigration, therefore, seems to undermine these premises of the nation state, by allowing citizens to exit the state’s territory and to give up their membership in the national collective. There are two principal reasons that emigration is so significant to national states in this regard. First of all, as Charles Tilly has remarked, the modern state prefers sedentary subjects who can more easily be counted, taxed, drafted into the army, sent to school and otherwise controlled.⁵ Hence, maintaining control over population movements, especially movements across state borders, is a central element of modern statehood. Second, nationalists usually view the ‘nation’ as a coherent body. To them, both entries into the nation as well as exits from it are potentially hazardous. Immigrants are often portrayed as a threat to the ‘purity’ of the nation, while emigration is considered a threat to its strength. Historically, nationalist concerns about emigration have been particularly intense in those regions where mass emigration paralleled nation-building. Germany, Italy and Poland, which all experienced massive emigration to the Americas in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are cases in point. Donna Gabaccia, Dirk Hoerder and Adam Walaszek stress that:

After the 1890s, nationalists in all three places dreamed that emigration would spread their cultures to less developed areas of the world, increasing their international influence. With World War I . . . and new world countries imposing sharp limits on immigration, the national states of Poland, Germany and Italy all sought to bind their citizens abroad – whether imagined as *Polonia*, *italiani nel mondo*, or *Auslandsdeutsche* – more closely to their national homelands.⁶

The nationalist conceptualization of emigration, thus, reveals a paradox of nationalism. On the one hand, nationalists strive to organize political sovereignty over a certain territory in the name of the nation in order to territorialize the nation. On the other hand, they may come to view the nation in a de-territorialized manner if membership in the nation is not defined only in political terms (as membership in the *polis*). In the latter case, the establishment of a state is often followed by policies that aim at extending sovereignty and symbolic control over all members of the nation who live outside the national state. The ideological basis of such politics is an ethnicized vision of the nation, as pointed out by Francesco Ruggazzi:

The deterritorialized conception of the management of a population arose from a fear of losing the national body and entailed a practice whereby the link with the ‘centre’ was not determined by territoriality, but by something else: kinship, ethnicity . . .⁷

The experience of emigration, therefore, fostered an ethnic understanding of the nation in the age of globalization.⁸ Geo-political realities in Southeastern Europe furthered this understanding. The region's nineteenth-century nationalists tended to stress descent and common culture as the defining characteristics of the nation. The fact that borders crossed through these imagined 'nations' following the establishment of nation states also made de-territorialized images of the nation widespread. The understanding of the nation that arose in this complicated context included people living outside the nation state – regardless of whether they were just across the border or across the Atlantic – even as it excluded all those of 'alien' descent who lived within the state's territorial boundaries. Thus, it is hardly surprising that nationalists often considered the emigration of minorities a means of 'cleansing' the nation of elements that it could not digest, that is, assimilate. The history of nation-building in Southeastern Europe since the nineteenth century is, in other words, also a history of forced emigration.⁹

The 'First' Yugoslavia as a National State

The connection between nation-building and emigration policies in interwar Yugoslavia is quite evident. Aleksandar Miletić, in his discussion of the Kingdom of SHS's emigration regime, contends that the Kingdom aimed at preventing the departure of 'national' elements, i.e. members of the imagined South Slavic nation, at the same time as it encouraged the emigration of non-Slavs.¹⁰ Non-Slavic Muslims (i.e., Albanians and Turks) faced the greatest pressure to emigrate, as has been highlighted by Edvin Pezo.¹¹ Pezo's research reveals that during the 1930s, the views of the Serb-dominated Belgrade political elite as well as those of local bureaucrats in so-called Southern Serbia (today's Kosovo and Macedonia) became more radical. It was at this time that extremists first argued for the deportation of Yugoslavia's Albanian and Turkish minorities. The 'first' Yugoslav state also planned to utilize domestic migration for nation-building and to 'Slavicize' both the Vojvodina region in the north of the country and 'Southern Serbia'. Each of these regions hosted large minorities (Magyars and Germans in the north, Albanians and Turks in the south) which were seen as disloyal and alien.¹²

These migration policies were framed by the Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia's complex nation-building project. Two major challenges shaped this effort. First, the Kingdom had to establish a viable state machinery in an area that until 1918 had been divided between seven territorial-political units. Second, the state had to create the nation whose political manifestation it was supposed to be. Both were demanding tasks. When the unification of the Yugoslav lands into the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Kingdom of SHS) was proclaimed on 1 December 1918, the new polity resembled a jigsaw of territories with very different historical experiences and a high degree of linguistic, religious and ethnic heterogeneity. A brief survey of these territories reveals their remarkable diversity. Serbia and Montenegro had been independent kingdoms before 1918, both including areas occupied during the recent Balkan Wars of 1912/13. The remaining territories

that came to comprise the new Kingdom of SHS had all been attached to Austria-Hungary. Slovenia¹³ and Dalmatia had been part of the Austrian ‘half’ (*Cisleithania*) of the Dual Monarchy. Croatia and Slavonia as well as the Vojvodina had all been associated with the Hungarian realm (*Transleithania*). While Croatia and Slavonia had been an autonomous kingdom within Hungary, the Vojvodina had been an integral part of Hungary. Finally, Bosnia-Herzegovina had held a special status within Austria-Hungary since its occupation in 1878 and annexation in 1908. The integration of these territories with their different legal systems and unique institutions was made even more difficult by the ethnic heterogeneity of the new state (Appendix, Table 1).

Given this remarkable internal heterogeneity and the daunting external challenges that Yugoslavia faced, the dominant political elite of the Kingdom felt an urgent need to integrate the country’s population and its administration into a unified national state. They argued that, ‘Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were but three “tribes” of a single, “tri-named” nation’.¹⁴ This idea of ‘Yugoslavism’ (‘South-Slavism’) had provided the founding ideology of the Kingdom of SHS, and consecutive governments of this new state wanted to make it a lived reality.¹⁵ Many bureaucrats and intellectuals believed in the existence of a Yugoslav nation and this concept informed the policies that they proposed. These elites considered the Yugoslav state to be the political manifestation of the South Slavs’ historic aspirations to unity and independence. Non-Slavic minorities were tolerated if only because tolerance was prescribed by the post-World War One peace treaties, but they certainly were not welcome. Attitudes towards the four major minorities – Germans, Magyars, Albanians and Turks – were further hardened by the fact that Yugoslav nationalists associated these groups with the oppression experienced by Slavs in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires.

‘Yugoslavism’, though, could mean very different things in politics. There is no space here for a recapitulation of the turmoil that characterized the political development of interwar Yugoslavia, but some of the dilemmas facing the young state must be mentioned because they affected emigration policies.¹⁶ The most salient political conflict was that between those who argued for a centralized state, and those who championed a federal order. The two main political forces contending over this issue were Belgrade-based parties on the one hand and the Croatian peasant party on the other. On 28 June 1921, parliament narrowly passed the new constitution, which envisioned a centralized state – an idea that was opposed by most Croatian politicians. Centralization and the concurrent propaganda of integral Yugoslavism got another major boost when, in the midst of political crisis, King Aleksandar I suspended the constitution and established a royal dictatorship on 6 January 1929. Aleksandar divided the country into a new set of administrative districts, which did away with the state’s historical provinces. In addition, he changed the state’s name to the ‘Kingdom of Yugoslavia’. Both of these measures were clearly aimed at creating and enforcing a common Yugoslav national identity. After the assassination of the King in a plot by Croatian and Macedonian nationalists in Marseille on 9 October 1934, these policies of

'Yugoslavism' were continued by the government of Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović.

In general, these policies failed to eradicate Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian national identifications. The Belgrade government's repressive policies, which furthered centralization under Serb leadership, reduced the appeal of a Yugoslav national identity for non-Serbs. Many a Serb politician or intellectual extolled the virtues of a Yugoslav identity while earnestly believing that Serbs were the new nation's most valuable element.¹⁷ Eventually, the Belgrade government acknowledged that its insistence on a unitary, centralized order undermined the viability of the state and it reached a compromise with Croatian leaders. In August 1939 the two sides agreed to establish an autonomous Croatian *Banovina*. The Banovina was to encompass most of the Croat populated areas of the country and to have its own governor and legislative assembly with jurisdiction in most policy areas. The new arrangement was not even fully implemented when Germany launched its attack on Yugoslavia on 6 April 1941, and promptly destroyed the state.

Institutionalizing Emigration Control

There were a number of reasons that Yugoslav policymakers were quick to turn their attention to emigration. First of all, they were impressed by the sheer number of what they considered 'Yugoslav' emigrants. Large areas that in 1918 became part of the Kingdom of SHS had experienced significant overseas emigration before World War One. The Slovenian lands, Croatia and Slavonia, Dalmatia, Montenegro and Macedonia were deeply affected by emigration at this time. According to US statistics, some 620,000 South Slavs immigrated to the United States of America between 1899 and 1920.¹⁸ In 1923, the Yugoslav Section of the US Foreign Information Service noted that of the 635,000 Yugoslavs currently in the United States, 350,000 were of Croat origin, 195,000 were Slovenes and 90,000 were Serbs. Most of them lived in Pennsylvania, Illinois and Ohio.¹⁹ In 1925 the leading Yugoslav migration expert, Artur Benko Grado estimated that some 743,300 Yugoslavs (6 per cent of the country's population) lived outside of Europe. Of these, 600,000 lived in the United States. The second largest Yugoslav 'colonies' were located in Argentina and Canada, with some 30,000 each.²⁰

Another impulse for attention to migration policies in the years after World War One was the high number of repatriates returning from overseas. Artur Benko Grado has estimated their number at 26,300 between the years of 1918 and 1920.²¹ According to him, these returnees often fell victim to swindlers who overcharged them for the voyage home or parted them from their savings in other ways. Thus, the need for state protection of repatriates arose. Migration experts also saw repatriates from the USA as a potential political threat because many of them were said to lean towards republicanism or even Bolshevism. Thus, political control of returnees was also considered necessary.²²

External factors played a role in the establishment of emigration controls as well. The restrictions on immigration imposed by many popular overseas destination countries forced countries of emigration, such as the Kingdom of SHS, to enforce exit quotas in order to avoid paying costs stemming from the repatriation of emigrants who had been denied entry. The most important immigration restrictions were those set by the United States. The Emergency Quota Act (also known as the Johnson Quota Act) of 1921 limited the annual number of immigrants from the Kingdom of SHS to 6,426 immigrants. US diplomats urged Yugoslav authorities to cooperate in enforcing the quota.²³ The Kingdom's new emigration service, therefore, was forced to regulate the issuing of passports for emigration to the United States in order to ensure that the quota was not exceeded. This proved to be difficult because many more Yugoslavs wanted to leave for the United States than would be admitted. During the 1921/2 fiscal year, for instance, the Yugoslav quota to the US was already exhausted on 1 December 1921.²⁴ Things became even more difficult when the US Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act (also known as the Immigration Act) in 1924, which set the Kingdom of SHS's new annual quota at 671 immigrants.

The government built specialized institutions in order to establish control over both emigration and repatriation. The first such institution was established in Zagreb. Known as the emigration office at the Department for Social Welfare of the Provincial Government of Croatia and Slavonia, this office was a relic from Habsburg times because the Provincial Government of the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia had already established an emigration office in 1909.²⁵ The revived emigration office in Zagreb maintained a hostel for emigrants and repatriates. It also passed along information about immigration restrictions to the provincial authorities, which were responsible for issuing passports. In May 1920, the Ministry for Social Policy in Belgrade, which was responsible for regulating emigration, established its own emigration department. The department's areas of competence included the regulation of emigration, the organization of repatriation, the circulation of 'national propaganda' amongst returnees, the settlement of legal issues between returnees and their relatives, and the posting of emigration deputies to countries of immigration.²⁶

Eventually, after several changes, the ministry in Belgrade took charge of the main responsibilities involved in regulating emigration, including the issuing of emigration passports.²⁷ Most of the practical work, though, was carried out in Zagreb, where the emigration office was renamed the General Commissariat for Emigration in November 1922. The Commissariat was responsible for the gathering of statistical data and was to report annually to the parliament in Belgrade. It published the brochures *Iseljenički vijesti (Emigration News)* and *Iseljenički propisi (Emigration Regulations)*, which informed the public about emigration rules, opportunities to emigrate, immigration legislation and various practical matters.

All of these institutions operated in the legal framework established by the Law on Emigration, which was passed by parliament on 30 December 1921.²⁸ When drafting the bill, Yugoslav policymakers had looked particularly closely at the

Italian emigration law of 1919. The Law on Emigration was mainly intended to bring the whole process of emigration – all the way from preparations for departure to arrival in the country of destination – under state control. According to article 7 of the law, emigrants were defined as ‘manual’ labourers who re-settled overseas (including Asia and Africa) as were any family members who accompanied them.²⁹ Hence, emigrants to European countries were not officially considered emigrants and did not figure in the emigration statistics until 1927 (Appendix, Figure 1). The Law on Emigration declared emigration ‘free’, with certain exceptions. The law prohibited pro-emigration agitation and it imposed strict regulations on the transportation of emigrants. All companies interested in transporting migrants from Yugoslavia had to acquire a licence from the government, for which they paid a fee. These fees and financial penalties received from steamship companies that violated the law would go into the ‘Emigration Fund’ (*iseljenički fond*). Emigrants had to pay an emigration fee as well, which also went into the Emigration Fund. The Fund supported emigrants in despair who wanted to return, financed a home for destitute emigrants in Yugoslavia, and paid the salaries of the emigration authority’s personnel.

One intention of the Yugoslav law, akin to the Italian one, was to ‘nationalize’ emigration and to make it economically beneficial for the state.³⁰ Emigrants were forced to leave from a domestic port, for example. This provision, however, proved not to be viable because the Kingdom lacked the necessary port infrastructure. The city of Rijeka with its deep-sea navigation port was occupied by armed Italian nationalists in September 1919 and became Italian territory in 1924. All of the Kingdom’s Adriatic ports were either not equipped for vessels capable of deep-sea navigation or lacked railway connections with the interior. The only exception was Sušak, a port at the edge of Rijeka, where Yugoslav control was established in February 1924. To solve this dilemma, the requirement that migrants embark and disembark at a domestic port was suspended.³¹ Consequently, most Yugoslav emigrants left from North Sea ports or from Genoa in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Law on Emigration also called for propaganda activities targeted at Yugoslav emigrants. In places with significant ‘Yugoslav’ émigré communities, migrant organizations were to be established. Liaison secretaries would link these organizations with the Yugoslav diplomatic services. Special envoys sent by the emigration department of the Ministry for Social Policy would also work with the emigrants. In the 1920s, the number of emigration deputies at ports, major railway stations and Yugoslav consulates abroad was increased. Eventually, deputies were stationed in the USA, Canada, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand. The total staff of the Yugoslav emigration service at the end of the 1920s stood at some 100 officials.³²

Debates in the late 1920s about a new law on Emigration, including the Emigration Conference in the town of Split in August 1929, did not result in any changes.³³ The king’s coup d’état in January 1929, the subsequent reorganization of the country’s political landscape, and the economic and political impact of the global depression on Yugoslavia caused emigration to give way to other, more

pressing problems. The legal and institutional framework of Yugoslav emigration policies thus remained in place until 1939, when the autonomous province of Croatia was established. A change came at this time because Croatia was responsible for its own social policy, including emigration policy, and was entitled to its own emigration service.³⁴

The 'Tenth' *Banovina*: Creating a Yugoslav Diaspora

Yugoslavia's emigration policies had two major motives. First, they were to provide protection for emigrants. Second, they were to render emigration useful for the creation of the Yugoslav nation. The latter rationale targeted both those who had already emigrated, and those still in the country. These (potential) emigrants were subjected to different emigration policies depending on whether or not they were considered 'national' elements.

One aim of the Yugoslavian policymakers was to turn South Slav emigrants abroad into a 'Yugoslav' diaspora. This exercise in long-distance nation-building was supposed to cause South Slavs abroad to identify themselves as Yugoslavs and to feel attachment to the Kingdom. A 1932 newspaper article illustrated this way of thinking:

According to the new administrative division [as of October 1929] there are nine *Banovina* [provinces] in Yugoslavia, but there is another area that we call the tenth *Banovina*, which is our colony in America. They count about one million people.³⁵

The prolific emigration activist Milotislav Bartulica demanded that Yugoslavs 'consider the emigrants as part of the living people and its state... The emigrants are part of our life'. According to him, emigration policy had to contribute to the strengthening of the 'whole body of the people' including those living far away. Because he believed that emigrants, by their 'moral solidarity and economic interests belong to the mother land', Bartulica argued against their becoming 'entrenched in another state or national organism'.³⁶ Similar thoughts had already been expressed in 1923 by migration expert Benko Grado in a report for the government:

Only recently had we become aware that besides the Yugoslavia here, there is another, though smaller one across the sea; that there are hundreds of thousands of people living there; that Pittsburgh is the fourth largest Yugoslav city in the world according to population.³⁷

The Yugoslav state called upon 'its' emigrants and their offspring to maintain loyalty to the Kingdom, to further its interests abroad, and not to assimilate into the culture of their destination country. The government also hoped that by strengthening the emigrants' attachment to the new country, it could convince them to continue sending money home. This was particularly important because

remittances comprised a large part of Yugoslav foreign currency earnings. In 1928, for example, the migrant savings inflow was estimated at one billion Dinars, which equalled 15 per cent of the total value of all exports of the Kingdom of SHS.³⁸ Contemporaneous observers noted that emigrants' money played a crucial role in stabilizing the Dinar and financing the country's current account.³⁹ Yugoslav experts estimated that from 1918 to 1930, emigrants sent between 13 and 20 million US dollars to the country every year. After 1931 the amount they sent receded due to the effects of the depression on migrant workers' saving capacities. This trend left Yugoslav experts scrambling to find ways to raise the inflow of remittances.⁴⁰

Imagining emigrants as a constituent part of the nation was by no means a unique trait of the Kingdom of SHS. Prior to 1918, for example, Polish nationalists had imagined the *Polonia* in America as the 'fourth' district of their partitioned nation. The governments of interwar Poland sought to establish cordial relations between the Polish state and its emigrants.⁴¹ Italian nationalists also considered the *italiani all'estero* to be an integral part of the nation. The Italian state tried to retain the loyalty of overseas emigrants, as well. Migrants who returned to Italy could easily regain their Italian citizenship, if they had become citizens of another country. Their children were considered Italian citizens even if they were born abroad.⁴²

Yet, who were the 'Yugoslav' emigrants that the Kingdom called upon to form a diaspora? The overwhelming majority of them had left Habsburg territories before the Kingdom of SHS was created. The emigrants that the state addressed had never been exposed to consistent Yugoslav nation-building. If they had possessed any sense of national identity when they left, they had most likely identified themselves as members of the Slovenian, Croatian or Serbian nation. Many of them would have also used a regional identity, describing themselves as 'Dalmatians' or 'Herzegovinians' for example, or a confessional identity. Yugoslav diaspora policies, in other words, had the ambitious goal of creating 'Yugoslavs' across the globe. A Ministry for Domestic Affairs policy paper deplored the fact that many emigrants did not yet know Yugoslavia, and so they still saw themselves as 'Austrians and Hungarians'.⁴³ Yugoslav diplomats, therefore, worked to instil a Yugoslav consciousness in South Slavic emigrants from territories now belonging to the Kingdom of SHS. By caring for the welfare of emigrants and providing financial support for emigrant organizations and periodicals, the government hoped to engender feelings of attachment to the new state.

The challenge was formidable. The most active emigrants were usually organized in émigré organizations based on confessional, ethnic or regional affiliations. A 1921 article in the Zagreb-based journal *Nova Evropa* deplored the 'division of [the emigrant organizations] into twenty or more according to tribe; that way they are much weaker and of less use'.⁴⁴ According to their names, at least, only a minority of emigrants' organizations were 'Yugoslav' in orientation. The Yugoslav government hoped that it could revive the emigrants' spirit of wartime unity, when many a South Slavic emigrant from Austria-Hungary had supported the creation of an independent Yugoslav state, which had been evident in the activities of the Yugoslav Committee in London, the Yugoslav Council in

Washington and the Yugoslav Peoples' Defence in South America.⁴⁵ With the establishment of a Yugoslav state, however, the pro-Yugoslav impulse seemed to have evaporated. The Consul of the Kingdom of SHS to Chicago stressed the particularism of the emigrants in the United States in a report in 1925:

Our people live mainly in colonies from the same village, district or region, and finally according to tribe (*pleme*). Their associations are organized accordingly as well... In places where they live mixed there is a competition between regional particularisms about prevalence and leadership: *Ličani*, *Hercegovci*, *Vojvođani*, *Crnogorci* among the Serbs; *Dalmatinci* and island people, *Banovci*, *Slavonci* among the Croats; *Kranjci*, *Korušani* and *Štajerci* among the Slovenes. The sentiments of local and regional patriotism are strongly developed so that in one and the same place, there are often two or three branches of the same fraternal union... Finally, they are organized in tribes: Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; the tribal particularities and intolerance are usually strong and verge on chauvinism and hostility. Aside from the tribal differentiation, the people are also religiously divided: there are Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox organizations.⁴⁶

A Yugoslav count of emigrant organizations in the USA in 1931 listed 15 major associations, only two of which used the word 'Yugoslav' in their names. The others called themselves Slovenian, Croat, Serb or Catholic. By far the largest associations were the 'Croatian Fraternal Union' (*Hrvatska Bratska Zajednica*), the 'Slovenian National Support Union' (*Slovenska Narodna Podporna Jednota*) and the 'Krain-Slovenian Catholic Union' (*Kransko-Slovenska Katoliška Jednota*), which claimed 92,000, 63,000 and 34,000 members respectively.⁴⁷ The 'Yugoslav' diaspora, thus, seems to have existed only in the minds of the Yugoslav policy-makers who imagined it. The emigrants who supposedly comprised it were unlikely to self identify as Yugoslav. The prominent writer Milan Marjanović denounced this state of affairs during a radio address in December 1937. Marjanović, who during World War One had lobbied for the unification of Yugoslavia among émigrés in North and South America, took umbrage at the 'tribal, regional, religious and party complacency and exclusiveness' of Yugoslavs within the country and abroad.⁴⁸

To make matters worse, the emigrants were also politically divided. In the eyes of the government, socialist and communist emigrant groups as well as 'separatists' were particularly suspicious. The second joint-ministry conference on emigration, held on 6 December 1930 in Belgrade, was therefore devoted to the 'political orientation of the emigrants'. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Domestic Affairs representatives highlighted the 'anti-state' propaganda carried out by communist emigrants in the USA, by Macedonian emigrants who had joined pro-Bulgarian organizations in North America, and by Croat separatists in South America. The conference concluded by recommending that joint actions be taken by the responsible ministries in order to crush 'hostile actions among our emigrants abroad' and to provide the emigrant communities with proper cultural activities in

order to strengthen their identification with Yugoslavia.⁴⁹ The Yugoslav state's fear of communists and separatists among the emigrants was also evident in police investigations of returnees. Especially after the assassination of King Aleksandar in 1934, repatriates from the Americas were systematically interviewed by the police in order to check their political affiliations and to gain intelligence on anti-regime émigré groups. In some cases, the police continued to monitor the movements and correspondence of returnees.⁵⁰

The authorities, then, tried to keep an eye on emigrants' political orientation. The diplomatic service, the emigration deputies and the Central Press Bureau at the President of the Ministerial Council collected information on emigrant organizations and their periodicals.⁵¹ Several émigré newspapers were outlawed in Yugoslavia because they were said to be 'writing against the interests of our state'.⁵² The royal dictatorship (1929–1934) prohibited the import of any Croat émigré periodical with the exception of two Yugoslav oriented ones.⁵³ Embassies gave occasional financial support to patriotic, that is, pro-Yugoslav, organizations and newspapers.⁵⁴ In the 1930s, the Emigration Commissariat in Zagreb also included a Department for National Propaganda Work among the Emigrants, which aimed at 'maintaining the national consciousness of our emigrants in the wider world and strengthening their forces of resistance in the struggle against assimilation'.⁵⁵ Another means of influencing the emigrants were radio broadcasts from Yugoslavia, which began in the late 1930s.⁵⁶

The subtitle of the journal *The Emigrants' World* (*Iseljenički svet*, established in 1938) provides an apt description of the rationale of these media efforts: 'Journal for National and Cultural Propaganda among the Yugoslav Emigration'. In periodicals such as this, emigrants learnt about the progress of Yugoslavia, the beauty of its landscapes, the fate of the ruling Karadjordjević dynasty, and the country's foreign policy successes. News briefs informed the emigrants about various events all over the country, such as the opening of a high school in a Bosnian provincial town, the erection of a monument to King Aleksandar I, the development of tourism in Montenegro, or the opening of new factories close to Belgrade. Articles also highlighted the emotional attachment of emigrants to Yugoslavia, which was manifest for example in their visits to the country. Emigrants 'from all five continents', the first issue of *Iseljenički svet* reported in 1938, came to the national pilgrimage site of Oplenac, where a Church and the Karadjordjević mausoleum commemorated the country's liberation. 'Thousands of Yugoslav emigrants water the grave of the King-Unifier', the journal reported.⁵⁷ These newspaper articles and also the radio broadcasts for emigrants in the 1930s displayed the ideology of integral Yugoslavism and were also characterized by an increasing professionalism.

The propaganda addressed not only emigrants but also the domestic audience. Emigration experts and émigré associations throughout the Kingdom informed the domestic public about the lives of emigrants. Emigrant organizations lobbied for greater support for the needs of emigrants and returnees, and developed recommendations on how emigration could be made beneficial for the economy. The first

such association, the Yugoslav Emigration Association (*Jugoslavensko iseljeničko udruženje*) was established in the town of Split in 1923. Similar organizations emerged later in Zagreb and other towns. In 1928 these groups founded an umbrella organization known as the ‘Union of the Organizations of the Emigrants’ (*Savez organizacija iseljenika*) in Zagreb. By 1937, this Union had grown to include 32 domestic and 22 foreign member organizations. Its major goal was the ‘representation and defence of our emigrants at home and abroad’.⁵⁸ The Union published the monthly journal *The New Emigrant* (*Novi Iseljenik*) and the magazine *Emigrant Museum* (*Iseljenički Muzej*), which reported on the emigrant museum that had been established in Zagreb in April 1936. The museum collected more than 120,000 items related to ‘Yugoslav’ emigration. Zagreb schools organized visits to the museum so that students would get to know their fellow-Yugoslavians abroad.⁵⁹ These efforts aimed at firmly establishing emigrants as part of the nation in the domestic consciousness. An important element of this project was its rendering of the nation into an imagined global community of fate. This task was undertaken in part by apprising Yugoslavs at home of emigrants’ lot. *The New Emigrant*, for example, reported extensively on the anti-immigrant riots in Australia in January 1934, when hundreds of Yugoslav (and other European) emigrants were injured by an Australian mob.⁶⁰ The government of Yugoslavia sent financial help to these endangered emigrants in the land down under.

Homogenizing the National ‘Body’

The state’s attempts to control emigration and create a diaspora were the publicly stated goals of emigration policies.⁶¹ Yet there was a hidden agenda as well. Successive governments aimed at exploiting emigration in order to ethnically homogenize Yugoslavia’s population by facilitating permanent emigration of non-Slavs and impeding the emigration of members of the ‘tri-unite’ nation. The principles of this policy were outlined by the director of the Emigration Commissariat in Zagreb, Fedor Aranicki. In a 1926 report to the Minister for Social Policy, Aranicki stressed that in recent years almost half of the emigrants leaving the Kingdom had been ‘a-national’ elements.⁶² He continued his report by noting that: ‘One of the tasks of our emigration policy is to exert influence over the emigration of the a-national minorities in the future as well, in order to return the affected regions to their original national character’.

Aranicki pointed out that if this policy was to be successful, the return of ‘a-national’ elements had to be prevented. This idea’s influence on policy was evident in the way that emigration passports for the United States were distributed among the country’s districts. In Slovenia, for example, the small district of Kočevje, where the territory’s German minority was concentrated, received 250 emigration passports for the USA in 1923/24. The city of Ljubljana, by contrast, was allocated only 10. Districts in the Vojvodina with large Hungarian and German minorities such as Sombor (291 passports) and Veliki Bečkerek (490 passports) were allocated many

more passports than the main city of the region, Novi Sad (40 passports).⁶³ Policymakers justified this distribution scheme as part of their effort to ensure that there were not 'any obstacles' to the emigration of members of 'alien' groups.⁶⁴ The requirement that emigrants had to apply for a special emigration passport, which could only be issued by the Ministry for Social Policy, also served the goal of establishing central government control over who could leave. Regular international passports were issued by local authorities.⁶⁵

Internal rules were explicit about the ethnically differentiated emigration policy. In 1924 the Minister for Social Policy informed the departments of his ministry that the emigration of 'a-national' families should be furthered, while 'national' families should be denied permission to emigrate, with the exception of re-migrants. 'National' elements were not to be granted emigration to Brazil on an individual basis, either. This regulation was due to the appalling economic and hygienic conditions endured by Yugoslav immigrants there.⁶⁶ On 24 March 1925, the Ministry for Social Policy sent a circular to the Department for State Security at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and to other authorities. Entitled, 'With Respect to the Emigration of National Minorities', declaring that:

In regard to the emigration of national minorities the Ministry shares the view that their emigration must be favoured. The relevant authorities have agreed and they maintain their interest in this issue; from that it follows that this was the line of the practised emigration policies.⁶⁷

The policy encountered difficulties in practice, however. In 1925, the Ministry had to concede that some local authorities had 'recently' departed from it and impeded the emigration of national minorities. The captain of the district of Bitola in the south of the country, for example, had stopped issuing passports to local Slavs because they would use the passports to travel to Bulgaria, where they received Bulgarian passports that allowed them to emigrate to North America. The emigration of Slavs from Macedonia was particularly tricky for the Yugoslav state. Many of them joined pro-Bulgarian, anti-Yugoslav nationalist organizations in America or Australia. These organizations agitated for the separation of the Serb-controlled part of Macedonia from Yugoslavia and its accession to Bulgaria. Successive Bulgarian governments supported these pro-Bulgarian activities in America and in Serb controlled Macedonia. The Yugoslav General Consul in Chicago reported in 1925 that many of the immigrants from Macedonia (or as he called it, 'Southern Serbia') were successfully recruited by the pro-Bulgarian Macedonian Political Organization in the United States and became lost for 'our propaganda'. He explained this process of recruitment in economic and social terms:

[They] are forced to find jobs over here with the help of their compatriots who had settled earlier and thus maintain the bonds to the *Bugaraši* [pro-Bulgarian Macedonians]. They enter actively into their organizations. This is made even easier

by the fact that the Serbian colony over here has completely different customs and a different mentality than our Macedonians.⁶⁸

To remedy this situation, the General Consul suggested stopping the emigration of Macedonians. The Ministry for Social Policy responded by reiterating its preference for facilitating minority emigration and in so doing it implicitly acknowledged the existence of a Bulgarian minority in Macedonia, which the government denied in official statements. The Ministry wrote that it was well known that members of the Bulgarian and Hungarian minorities supported irredentist causes. Thus, the Ministry preferred that they leave for good. However, the Ministry was aware that many emigrants would continue their anti-state propaganda abroad and, therefore, requested opinions from other Ministries concerning the question, 'whether these elements are more dangerous within the borders of the state or abroad, i.e. whether their emigration should be favoured or obstructed'.⁶⁹

This episode shows that the implementation of a policy to further minority emigration was more difficult than initially thought. Furthermore, the government became aware that due to its repressive minority policies and its support for minority emigration, it unwillingly contributed to the creation of a disloyal anti-diaspora. These émigrés from Yugoslavia continued to fight for their home regions' separation from Yugoslavia long after they had left the country. The case of the Macedonians was especially worrisome for the government, because the Slavic inhabitants of Macedonia were officially considered Serbs. Yet, even authorities on the ground were forced to recognize that their 'Serbianization' policies were failing. This became particularly evident when Slavs who had emigrated from Macedonia articulated pro-Bulgarian sentiments. Officials reasoned that such rhetoric could at least be suppressed by the police if Bulgarian Slavs were kept in the Kingdom of SHS.

The government's attempt to impede the emigration of 'national elements' was also challenged by local forces. In 1924, for example, the district captain of Dubrovnik responded to the Ministry for Social Policy's instructions that no 'national families and individuals' were to be allowed to emigrate to Brazil. In his response, the captain informed the Ministry that he had been approached by the local authorities of the town of Blato on the Adriatic island of Korčula, because 70 families wanted to leave Blato for Brazil. The economic conditions on the island were so bad that people felt that they had no choice but to emigrate. People from the island had emigrated in the past in order to escape the bad conditions there. Furthermore, emigration to Brazil was cheap because the Brazilian government paid for the migrant's transportation.⁷⁰ The district captain requested instructions from the Ministry on how to proceed. The Ministry's response to this specific case is not known, but in general the Ministry for Social Policy maintained its policy of barring 'national elements' from emigrating to Brazil while favouring 'a-nationals' who wanted to do so.⁷¹

During the Great Depression the most notable Yugoslav emigration expert, Artur Benko Grado, questioned the wisdom of this policy. In a policy paper on

the 'Emigration of Our National Elements, Especially from Rural Joint Families' he argued that the preference given to the emigration of minorities ought to be reversed.⁷² Grado argued that many members of large family households (*zadruga*) in the countryside would return after some years of working abroad because part of their family remained in Yugoslavia. These repatriates would come back with savings and new knowledge that would benefit their families. Grado also stressed the fact that many rural families owned so little land that all of their able-bodied members could not be meaningfully employed on the family farm. It would, therefore, be far better if these additional family members took a job abroad for a couple of years, sending money home and eventually returning with savings. Grado questioned the assumption that emigration would lead to destitution. He claimed that regions with minority populations, such as the Vojvodina, were currently flourishing due to remittances sent home by former residents, whose emigration the state had supported. Grado, therefore, suggested revising the policy of deterring 'national' elements from emigration and supporting 'a-national' ones because this policy had adverse economic effects for Yugoslavia.

The policy of facilitating minority emigration was not carried out with the same gusto for all minority groups. Official pressure to leave and the state of a minority group's rights were correlated to the extent that that minority was considered hostile to the government. The large German minority fared the best in this regard because it was not seen as a threat. Principally, this was because Germany did not harbour claims on Yugoslav territory. Additionally, after 1933 Yugoslavia became increasingly dependent on trade with Nazi Germany. Still, Germans were actually overrepresented among Yugoslavia's overseas migrants. The overall rate of overseas emigration was so low, however, that it did not significantly change the country's demographics. With the exception of the years immediately following World War One, emigration of Germans to Germany and Austria was also insignificant. The Yugoslav emigration expert Benko Grado even reasoned that because the Germans were hard-working and easy to govern, they should not be pushed to leave.⁷³ In comparison with the Germans, the Hungarian minority's rights were violated much more frequently. The fact that the Hungarian minority was concentrated near the Hungarian border, and that Hungary pursued revisionist claims towards Yugoslavia, made the group a threat in the eyes of the Belgrade government. Nevertheless, there is no indication that a coherent policy forced Hungarians to leave. The bulk of Hungarian emigrants from Yugoslavia left immediately after World War One. In total it is estimated that some 45,000 Hungarians emigrated from Yugoslavia between 1918 and 1924.⁷⁴

The non-Slavic Muslim minorities (ethnic Turks and Albanians) faced much greater pressure to emigrate because the dominant Serb political elite considered them a particularly problematic group. Edvin Pezo estimates that between 1919 and 1941 some 64,000 to 78,000 Muslims left 'Southern Serbia' for Turkey.⁷⁵ These Muslim minorities did not fit the notion of a South Slavic *Kulturnation* (cultural nation) and no leading politician believed that they would ever be assimilated (the Serbo-Croatian speaking Bosnian Muslims, on the other hand, were considered to

be part of the Yugoslav nation). Many Serbs considered Albanians and Turks to be modern-day embodiments of the former Ottoman 'oppressor'. Perhaps more importantly, Albanians and Turks populated so-called Southern Serbia (Kosovo and Macedonia), the region that Serb politicians considered the spiritual heart of Serbia. Administrative and legal measures undertaken by the Yugoslav government facilitated their emigration. These migrants were, for example, exempted from the obligatory fee that an emigrant usually had to pay in order to leave Yugoslavia.⁷⁶ The Law on Citizenship, which came into effect on 1 November 1928, included a clause that allowed non-Slavs who had been citizens of the Ottoman Empire until 1913 to opt out of Yugoslav citizenship. Anyone who made use of this option, however, had to leave the country within a year.⁷⁷ Non-Slavic Muslims were not granted the right to repatriate to Yugoslavia even if they held Yugoslav citizenship.

Parallel to its support for the emigration of Albanians and Turks from Southern Serbia, the government also encouraged Serb families to colonize the region. These migrants came mainly from Bosnia, Montenegro and the Karst Regions of Croatia. They were sent to Kosovo and Macedonia in order to re-shape the ethno-demographic situation there (Slavic families were also resettled to the Vojvodina). Because colonists received land, tax credits and other benefits from the government, it was thought that they would put additional pressure on the local Muslim population and thus make emigration seem even more desirable to Muslims. Some 13,000 families, most of whom were Serbs, were settled in Kosovo alone.⁷⁸ Although the government usually framed this policy in terms of strengthening the 'Yugoslav' nation, its subtext was clear. The aim was to Serbianize Kosovo and Macedonia. It was also not by chance that many local administrators in these regions were drawn from ardently nationalist Serbian circles. The authorities also hoped that the opportunity to get land and government subsidies within Yugoslavia would prevent 'national' peasant families from emigrating. Djordje Kristić, who was responsible for conducting agrarian reform and colonization in Macedonia, wrote that: 'The problem of Southern Serbia is connected with the emigration question. All of our national elements, who would be forced to leave the country, will find a place in Southern Serbia'.⁷⁹ Even some emigrants from America returned to Yugoslavia in order to settle in Kosovo – though many of them later returned to America because of the terrible conditions they found there.⁸⁰

In the 1930s increasing international tensions led to growing fears among the political elite in Belgrade about the loyalty of minority populations. The governments of Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović (1935–1939) in particular, which propagated integral Yugoslavism, aimed at resettling Albanians and Turks outside of Yugoslavia. An Inter-Ministerial Conference, constituted by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of Domestic Affairs, of Agriculture and the General Command of the Army, came up with a radical plan on the 'Question of the Emigration of the Non-Slavic Population from Southern Serbia' in the autumn of 1935.⁸¹ The Conference recommended that the government sign a bilateral resettlement treaty with the Republic of Turkey. In case this proved impossible, the memorandum detailed a range of measures intended to put so much pressure on Turks and

Albanians that they would leave 'voluntarily', without provoking the League of Nations to intervene. Among these were the rigorous enforcement of all laws and regulations, especially with regard to taxation, the suppression of Albanian anti-emigration propaganda, the mobilization of non-Slavic males in Southern Serbia for army training and manoeuvres as often as possible, the preclusion of non-Slavs from holding government jobs, the strict enforcement of obligatory schooling in 'our schools' and finally the rapid 'nationalization' of toponyms and personal names.

Local authorities' implementation of these measures in Southern Serbia often turned violent. Nevertheless, only a few thousand Muslims appear to have left in the 1930s, in part because Turkey was reluctant to accept Albanians. Only Turkish-speaking Muslims or those who adhered to 'Turkish' cultural practices were welcomed by Ankara.⁸² In July 1938, the governments of Yugoslavia and Turkey eventually signed a Convention regulating the resettlement of 40,000 'Turkish' families. Due to the outbreak of World War Two, however, it was never implemented. More radical ideas, such as the forced expulsion of Albanians, which was demanded by the well known University of Belgrade Professor Vaso Čubrilović in a 1937 lecture, were not carried out either.

Results

Yugoslav emigration policies did impact upon emigration but not to the extent that the government hoped they would. Take, for example, the government's attempt to create a Yugoslav diaspora. As reports detailing divisions among emigrant groups revealed, only some of the emigrants of 'Yugoslav' extraction actually identified with the Yugoslav nation. Yugoslav policymakers repeatedly deplored the fact that emigrants in America became increasingly assimilated and their organizations declined because there were so few new arrivals from Yugoslavia.⁸³ The few links that the emigrants did maintain with the old country mainly connected them to their families and their native communities. Rarely did these links connect them to the abstract collective of the Yugoslav nation.

Yet mid-1930s consular reports from South America provide some evidence of the strengthening of 'Yugoslav' consciousness among some emigrants there. This was attributed to the increased concern of the Yugoslav government for these emigrants.⁸⁴ Furthermore, during World War Two, when the fate of the family in the 'old country' became linked to the nation in a very existential manner, emigrants did rally for Yugoslavia. During the War, emigrants organized support for occupied Yugoslavia and lobbied for the country's liberation regardless of whether they considered themselves Yugoslavs or identified with one of the state's constituent nations.⁸⁵ A contingent, dramatic event thus impacted emigrants' loyalties and reconfigured them into a temporary diaspora.

The authorities' nationally differentiated attitude towards emigration did result in disproportionate minority emigration. Between 1921 and 1933 (the last year with an ethnic breakdown of emigrants), 17.5 per cent (29,887 persons) of all registered

emigrants (170,969) belonged to the German minority, and 8.9 per cent (15,293 persons) to the Hungarian minority (Appendix, Table 2). This was far beyond their share of the country's total population, which was about 4 per cent in each case (Appendix, Table 1). Nevertheless, the vast majority of emigrants were classified as 'Yugoslavs', so the prevention of emigration by 'national' elements was a failure. There was also no significant emigration to Austria, Germany and Hungary – with the exception of the first years after World War One – a trend that indicates that few ethnic Germans and Hungarians left for their supposed 'homelands'. The prohibition against the repatriation of 'a-national' emigrants was not enforced, either (see Appendix, Table 3). The share of Germans amongst all repatriates from overseas was more than twice their share in the total population. Hungarians were also allowed to return. Muslim Albanians and Turks did leave in significant numbers but far fewer members of these groups left than Serb politicians had initially hoped. In general, emigration numbers from Yugoslavia were too small in the interwar period to have a significant impact on the population's ethnic distribution. The only 'success' of Yugoslavia's nationalistically motivated migration policies was the noticeable increase of the Serbian population in Kosovo, from 21.1 per cent of the region's total population in 1921 to 31.1 per cent in 1931, which was due to state-sponsored colonization.⁸⁶

The government in Belgrade often failed to ensure the execution of the policies it intended to implement. District authorities, for example, ignored instructions from the central government if they considered emigration to be an economic benefit. Corruption added further arbitrariness to the administration of emigration. Archival documents and newspaper reports reveal that the payment of bribes significantly smoothed the issuing of emigration passports. A secretary in the Ministry for Social Policy's emigration department informed the minister in August 1923 that 'the whole country knows' that passports for emigration are issued by the department only after the payment of bribes.⁸⁷ In Belgrade, an agency known as 'Mediator' offered passport applicants help with the authorities – for a fee, of course.⁸⁸ Irregularities and corruption were also reported from consulates.⁸⁹

Conclusion

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia's experiences regulating migration were similar to those of many other states. Much like their counterparts elsewhere, Yugoslav policymakers found that neither emigration nor immigration could be totally controlled by the state. Nevertheless, the example of interwar Yugoslavia offers important lessons about the place of emigration in times of intense nation- and state-building. Emigration can be as politicized as immigration and it can be used as a means towards nationalism. Yugoslav emigration policies highlight the dominant notions about the nature of the nation amongst political and bureaucratic elites. These elite actors envisioned the state as the 'tri-unite nation' comprised of

the Serb, Croat and Slovenian ‘tribes’. Adherence to this notion resulted in policies that included specific groups in the nation and excluded others from it. Policies of exit and entry are excellent examples of this.

Imagining the nation as an ethnic community resulted in a de-territorialized vision of the nation that allowed for its members to be dispersed across the globe. Interwar Yugoslav politicians and bureaucrats considered the nation’s dislocation to be a potential resource for their state and thus embarked on a policy of diaspora-building. They engaged in transnational policies for the sake of nation-building. Membership in the transterritorial nation required the performance of duties for the ‘motherland’, such as remitting money and lobbying for the ‘old home’ but it also came with rights, such as the promise of protection by the government.⁹⁰ Attempts to exploit emigration as a means towards state development also show how interwar Yugoslavia’s political system was essentially modernist. This was a state that aimed at establishing its authority over the most basic processes of social reproduction, including migration, and at projecting its sovereignty over all its citizens, no matter where they lived.

Finally, this case is instructive due to the longer historical continuities of which it is part. Already before World War One, the provincial government of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia had considered ways to turn the South Slavic emigrants from its territory into a loyal diaspora. Later, the fascist Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, 1941–45) had similar designs. After World War Two, socialist Yugoslavia also actively engaged in identity politics towards emigrants. Those emigrants who had left before socialist Yugoslavia was established were targeted by state propaganda and called upon to return, so long as they were not considered to be ‘hostile’ elements. Each individual republic created an association for its emigrants which informed them about developments in their former home and aimed at nourishing a feeling of belonging to Yugoslavia. When more than a million so-called *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) left Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s, the authorities continued to regard them as an integral part of the Yugoslav working class, addressing them by specific identity policies. The post-Yugoslav successor states pursued similar policies when they called upon their ‘diasporas’ to help them in the struggle for independence and the war effort during the 1990s. Co-ethnic emigrants were also urged to return to their now independent ‘home country’.⁹¹ Emigration policies, therefore, are a political *longue durée* phenomenon in the area of the former Yugoslavia. They prove that transnationalism should not be set against nationalism – transnational links and activities can be a part, or even the result, of nationalist designs.

Acknowledgements

Research for this paper was supported by grants from the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). I want to thank Aleksandar Miletić, Keith Brown, Edvin Pezo and the two anonymous reviewers for their most helpful comments and suggestions.

Notes

1. Archive of Yugoslavia, henceforth abbreviated as AJ, Konsulat u Buenos Airesu, f. 385, fasc. 4, a. jed. 29 (385-4-29), 62.
2. *Ibid.*, 474.
3. A note on terminology is called for here: the official name of interwar Yugoslavia was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (*Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, SHS) until 3 October 1929, when the new constitution changed the name of the state to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (*Kraljevina Jugoslavija*).
4. Nancy L. Green and François Weil, 'Introduction', in Nancy L. Green and François Weil (eds), *Citizenship and Those Who Leave: The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation* (Urbana, IL 2007), 3.
5. Charles Tilly, 'Migration in Modern European History', in William H. McNeill and Ruth S. Adams (eds), *Human Migration: Patterns and Policies* (Bloomington, IN 1978), 48.
6. Donna R. Gabbaccia, Dirk Hoerder and Adam Walaszek, 'Emigration and Nation Building during the Mass Migrations from Europe', in Green and Weil (eds), *op. cit.*, 65.
7. Francesco Raggazzi, 'The Croatian "Diaspora Politics" of the 1990s, Nationalism Unbound?', in Ulf Brunnbauer (ed.), *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics: Migrations in the (Post-)Yugoslav Region, 19th–21st Century* (Munich 2009), 152.
8. Cf. Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich 2006), 23.
9. For an overview of 'ethnic cleansing' in Southeastern Europe see Ulf Brunnbauer, Michael G. Esch and Holm Sundhaussen (eds), *Definitionsmacht, Utopie, Vergeltung. 'Ethische Säuberungen' im östlichen Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Münster 2006).
10. Aleksandar R. Miletić, *Journey under Surveillance: The Overseas Emigration Policy of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in Global Context, 1918–1928* (Belgrade 2009), 109–21.
11. Edvin Pezo, "'Re-Conquering" Space. Yugoslav Migration Policies and the Emigration of Non-Slavic Muslims to Turkey (1918–1941)' in Brunnbauer (ed.), *Transnational Societies, Transterritorial Politics*, 71–92.
12. One of the most recent and comprehensive treatments of colonization in interwar Yugoslavia is Bogdan Lekić, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji. 1918–1941* (Belgrade 2002).
13. Before 1918 there had not been an administrative unit called Slovenia as the territory of what was to become Slovenia was part of various provinces of Austria-Hungary.
14. Sabrina Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias. State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (Bloomington, IN 2006), 36.
15. See Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY 1988); Dejan Djokić (ed.), *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992* (London 2003).
16. For recent English language treatments of the political developments 1918–1941 see Dejan Djokić, *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia* (New York 2007); Ramet, *op. cit.*, 35–112.
17. Holm Sundhaussen, *Geschichte Serbiens* (Vienna, Cologne, Weimar 2007), 283–4.
18. Letter by the Emigration Commissariat in Zagreb to the Minister for Social Policy, 1921. Croatian State Archive, Zagreb (hereafter abbreviated as HDA), Grado, f. 790, k. 5, 519-520.

19. Foreign Language Information Service. Jugoslav Bureau. New York City, 29 May 1923, in HDA, f. 790, k. 6.
20. 'Slika našeg seljenj', in HDA, f. 790, k. 10.
21. A. B. Grado, 'Rad izeljeničkog odseka' (1925), in HDA, f. 790, k. 9, 15/148.
22. A. B. Grado, 'Exposé on the organization of the emigration service', 24 August 1920, in HDA, f. 790, k. 3.
23. *Iseljeničke vijesti*, no. 4/5 (Zagreb), 1923, 65–6.
24. HDA, f. 790, k. 4, 242.
25. 'Obrazloženje k Osnovi Zakona o Iseljivanju' (1914), in HDA, f. 1071, k. 550.
26. A. B. Grado, 'Istorijat naše državne iseljeničke službe od njezina osnutka 1901. do obrazovanja Iseljeničkog komesarijata 1923,' in HDA, f. 790, k. 7, 119–131.
27. 'Pravilnik o izdavanju i viziranju putnih isprava,' *Službene novine*, no. 85, 14. April 1924, article 57; see also Artur Grado Benko, 'Razvitak naše državne iseljeničke službe, part 2', *Jutarnji list*, no. 9954, 10 October 1939, 13; Ljubomir Antić, 'Iseljenička politika stare jugoslavenske države', in Nusret Šehić et al. (eds), *Migracije i Bosna i Hercegovina* (Sarajevo 1990), 229–36.
28. The law came into effect with its publication, 'Zakon o iseljavanju', *Službene novine*, no. 39, 21 February 1922. Implementing provisions came into effect in September 1922 (*Službene Novine*, no. 194A, 1 September 1922), modified in July 1923 (*Službene Novine*, no. 184, 30 July 1923). The Law was based on a May 1921 decree on emigration issued by the Ministry for Social Policy (*Službene novine*, no. 151, 14 July 1921).
29. 'Pravilnik o izvršenju zakona o iseljavanju,' *Službene Novine*, no. 194A, 1 September 1922, art. 7.
30. Miletić, op. cit. 3.
31. 'Pravilnik o izvršenju zakona o iseljavanju', art. 8.
32. Nada Hranilović, 'Iseljenička politika i služba u Jugoslaviji između dva rata', *Migracijske teme* Vol. 3(3–4) (1987), 332.
33. For the deliberations in 1929 see M. Bartulica, 'O novom iseljeničkom zakonu', *Novi Iseljenik*, no. 8, 1 August 1929, 1–2.
34. *Novosti*, no. 339, 8 December 1939, 9; 'Iseljenička služba u Zagrebu', *Hrvatski iseljenik*, no. 1, January 1940, 1.
35. 'Što su doseljenici iz Amerike doprinijeli domovini', *Pučka prosvjeta* (Split), 1 April 1932, 74.
36. Milotislav Bertulica, *Iseljenička politika* (Zagreb 1929), 4–7.
37. Artur Benko-Bojnički [Grado], 'Naša emigraciona politika', in HDA, f. 790, k. 7, 258.
38. *AJ*, 14-36-112, 264.
39. Jovan N. Dunda, 'Značenje iseljeničkih uštednji za našu plaćevu bilancu', *Ekonomist* (Zagreb), Vol. 6(4–5) (1940), 142–54.
40. Artur Benko Grado, 'Možemo li pojačati priliv iseljeničkog novca?', *Jugoslovenski Lloyd*, 23 December 1934, 9–10.
41. Gabbaccia, Hoerder and Walaszek, op. cit., 77–9.
42. Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New Haven, London 2000), 176.
43. *AJ*, Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova, 14-34-1004, 530.
44. Branko Lazarević, 'Jugoslovenske potporne organizacije u Americi', *Nova Evropa*, 21 March 1921, 20.

45. 'Istorijska uloga jugoslovenskih iseljenika u stvaranju narodne države', *Iseljenički svet*, Vol. 1(1), October 1938, 11–12.
46. 'Opšti izveštaj o našim kolonijama i delokrugu ovog Gener. Konsulata', 2 February 1925, in AJ 14-34-104, 648–50.
47. Berislav Angjelinović and Ivan Mladineo (eds), *Jugoslovenski Almanak, Jugosloveni u sjedinjenim državama Amerika* (New York 1931).
48. 'Milan Marjanović, Naši iseljenici (radio-predavanje)', *Novi Iseljenik*, Vol. 17(1), January 1938, 1.
49. AJ, 38-111-250 (Presbiro, 1930).
50. See respective files in HDA, f. 1356 (Repatrirci), k. 3, Povratnici (Amerika etc.), 1922–1940.
51. See for example an extensive communiqué of the Central Press Bureau detailing the political affiliation of the most important 'Yugoslav' émigré newspapers and journals submitted to the government in 1938, in AJ, 38-111-250 (Presbiro, 1938).
52. HDA, SORIS, f. 967, k. 36.
53. 'Hrvatskim iseljeničkim listovima treba dati slobodu ulaska u domovinu', *Hrvatski iseljenik*, Vol. 19(2), February 1940, 1.
54. 'Opšti izveštaj o našim kolonijama u delokrugu ovog Gener. Konsulata', 648–50.
55. Iseljenički Komesarijat, 'Izveštaj o radu Iseljeničkog Komesarijata u 1934 godini', in HDA, Iseljenički Komesarijat, f. 1071, k. 548, 12.
56. HDA, f. 967 (SORIS), k. 37, fasc. 261.
57. 'Oplenac – mesto hodočašća naših iseljenika', *Iseljenički svet*, Vol. 1(1), October 1938, 3–4.
58. AJ, 14-34-104; see also the archive of SORIS, in HDA, f. 967.
59. HDA, f. 1619 (Iseljenički muzej), k. 2.
60. 'Strahovita nasilja nad strancima u Australiji', *Novi Iseljenik*, Vol. 13(4), April 1934, 1–2.
61. These goals are summarized by Artur Benko-Bojnički [Grado], 'Koje bi smjernice trebalo dati našoj emigracionoj politici', *Socijalni preporodaj*, Vol. 5(1–2) (1925), 27–45.
62. Letter by Fedor Aranicki to the Minister for Social Policy, 23 March 1926, in HDA, f. 790, k. 10, 74–76.
63. 'Rad izeljeničkog odseka', 1925, in HDA, f. 790, k. 9, 15/165-167.
64. *Ibid.*, 15/160.
65. 'Pravilnik o izdavanju i viziranju putnih isprava', *Službene novine*, 14 April 1924, art. 57.
66. 'Circular no. 296', 1 September 1924, in HDA, Benko, f. 790, k. 8, 221.
67. AJ, 14-39-144, 679–680.
68. *Ibid.*, 680.
69. *Ibid.*, 680.
70. Letter by the Veliki Župan of Dubrovnik to the Department for State Security of the Ministry for Social Policy, 30 December 1924, in AJ, 14-39-144, 645.
71. Letter by the Minister for Social Policy to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 17 November 1925, in AJ, 14-34-104, 414.
72. Artur Benko Grado, 'Iseljivanje nacionalnih elemenata, a osobito seoskih zadrugara', in HDA, f. 790, k. 12, 27–28.
73. Artur Benko Grado, 'Mišljenje', 7 April 1925, in HDA, Benko. f. 790, k. 9, 283–284.
74. Carl Bethke, *Deutsche und ungarische Minderheiten in Kroatien und der Vojvodina 1918–1941. Identitätsentwürfe und ethnopolitische Mobilisierung* (Wiesbaden 2009), 161–5.

75. Pezo, op. cit., 80.
76. AJ, 14-35-111, 911–915.
77. ‘Zakon za državljanstvo,’ *Službene novine*, 1 November 1928, art. 55. Until the Law on Citizenship was passed in 1928, the Kingdom of SHS had no unified citizenship legislation. Hans-Joachim Seeler, *Das Staatsangehörigkeitsrecht von Jugoslawien* (Frankfurt, Berlin 1956), 1–19.
78. Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (Basingstoke 1998), 282.
79. Djordje Kristić, ‘Južna Srbija i iseljenički problem’, in *Izseljenički magazin*, Vol. 1(2), November 1927, 19.
80. Malcolm, op. cit., 282.
81. ‘Zaključak interministerijalne konferencije o iseljenju neslovenskog elementa iz južnih krajeva’, in AJ, 67-1-17. For details on the meeting see Vladan Ivanović, ‘Interministerijalna konferencija Kraljevine Jugoslavije o iseljenju “neslovenskog elementa” u Tursku (1935)’, *Prilozi* (Sarajevo), 35, 206, 105–24.
82. Pezo, op. cit., 90.
83. ‘Simonović ipak ima pravo’, *Iseljenik*, Vol. 2(11) (1926), 1; ‘Nacionalna svijest našeg iseljeničtva’, *Novi Iseljenik*, Vol. 14(2), February 1935, 1; ‘Govor g. Ministra D. Cvetković o iseljeničkom pitanju u Narodnoj Skupštini’, *Novi Iseljenik*, Vol. 16(4), April 1947, 3–4.
84. See for example a report by the *Comision Cultural Yugoslavia* sent to the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs about the émigré organizations in Uruguay, 20 August 1936, in AJ 20-2-22; letter from the Yugoslav ambassador to Buenos Aires about the ‘Situation of our colony in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil’ to Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović, 15 January 1939, in AJ, 385-2-22.
85. Milan Bulajić, ‘Iz istorije iseljeničtva – pouke za današnjicu; Jugosloveni u Sjedinim Američkim Državama’, in Ivan Čizmić et al. (eds), *Iseljeničtvo naroda i narodnosti Jugoslavije i njegove uzajamne veze s domovinom* (Zagreb 1978), 57–64.
86. Milan Vučković, Goran Nikolić, *Stanovništva Kosova u razdoblju 1918. do 1991. godine sa osvrtom na prethodni istorijski period* (Munich 1996), 80.
87. Letter by Milan Kuzmanović, AJ, 14-34-104, 533–534.
88. *Novosti* (Belgrade), 23 October 1923 (kept in AJ, 14-37-114, 12); see Miletić, op cit., 122–8. The whistle-blower Kuzmanović was removed from his job.
89. See for example the letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Yugoslav embassy in Buenos Aires detailing several violations of the rule, 7 December 1931, in AJ, 385-4-29.
90. On the ‘transterritorial’ conceptualization of the nation in the Balkans see Susanne-Sophia Spiliotis, *Transterritorialität und nationale Abgrenzung. Konstitutionsprozesse der griechischen Gesellschaft und Ansätze ihrer faschistoiden Transformation, 1922/24–1941* (Munich 1998).
91. See Paul Hockenos, *Homeland Calling: Exile Patriotism and the Balkan Wars* (New York 2003).

Ulf Brunnbauer is Full Professor of the History of Southeastern and Eastern Europe at the University of Regensburg and Director of the Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg. With Claudia Kraft and Martin Schulze Wessel he edited *Sociology and Ethnography in East-Central and South-East Europe: Scientific Self-Description in State Socialist Countries* (Munich 2011). He is currently working on labour emigration from the Balkans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Appendix

Table 1. The ethnic composition of the Kingdom of SHS in 1918

		% of total
Serbs (including Montenegrins)	4,704,876	39.0
Croats	2,889,102	23.9
Slovenes	1,023,588	8.5
Muslim Serbo-Croats	759,656	6.3
Macedonians	630,000	5.3
Germans	512,207	4.3
Albanians	483,871	4.0
Magyars	472,079	3.9
Romanians	183,563	1.6
Turks	143,453	1.2
Italians	11,630	0.1
Other Slavs	198,887	1.6
Others	42,756	0.3

Source: *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, vol. 6 (Zagreb 1990), 263.

Table 2. Overseas emigrants from Yugoslavia, by ethnicity, 1921–1933

	Yugoslavs		Germans		Magyars		Total
	number	in %	number	in %	number	in %	in % of total emigration
1921	9,516	73.40	2,594	20.01	700	5.40	98.80
1922	4,880	80.18	760	12.49	259	4.26	96.93
1923	5,698	60.81	2,322	24.78	1,169	12.48	98.07
1924	8,525	49.45	4,239	24.59	4,218	24.47	98.51
1925	7,824	52.14	3,692	24.61	3,082	20.54	97.29
1926	11,044	70.23	2,671	16.98	1,563	9.94	97.15
1927	13,775	70.62	3,561	18.26	1,667	8.55	97.42
1928	14,939	76.76	3,092	15.89	985	5.06	97.70
1929	10,599	67.38	3,844	24.44	799	5.08	96.90
1930	8,091	70.79	2,308	20.19	632	5.53	96.52
1931	2,639	78.15	465	13.77	134	3.97	95.88
1932	1,342	83.88	193	12.06	31	1.94	97.88
1933	1,207	83.94	146	10.15	54	3.76	97.84

Note: Emigrants with foreign citizenship have been excluded from this calculation.

Source: *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929* (Belgrade 1930), 131; *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1933* (Belgrade 1934), 70–1.

Table 3. Returnees from overseas to Yugoslavia, by ethnicity, 1924–1933

	Yugoslavs		Germans		Magyars		Total
	number	in %	number	in %	number	in %	in %
1924	2,993	79.28	461	12.21	98	2.60	94.09
1925	4,188	85.12	450	9.15	233	4.74	99.00
1926	3,889	80.38	568	11.74	248	5.13	97.25
1927	3,982	84.62	440	9.35	192	4.08	98.05
1928	2,982	78.56	499	13.15	205	5.40	97.10
1929	3,764	79.46	581	12.27	241	5.09	96.81
1930	4,866	81.44	627	10.49	279	4.67	96.60
1931	6,386	83.75	723	9.48	232	3.04	96.28
1932	4,555	83.75	520	9.56	197	3.62	96.93
1933	2,610	83.23	281	8.96	95	3.03	95.22

Note: Returnees with foreign citizenship have been excluded from this calculation.

Source: *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929* (Belgrade 1930), 131; *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1934* (Belgrade 1935), 70.

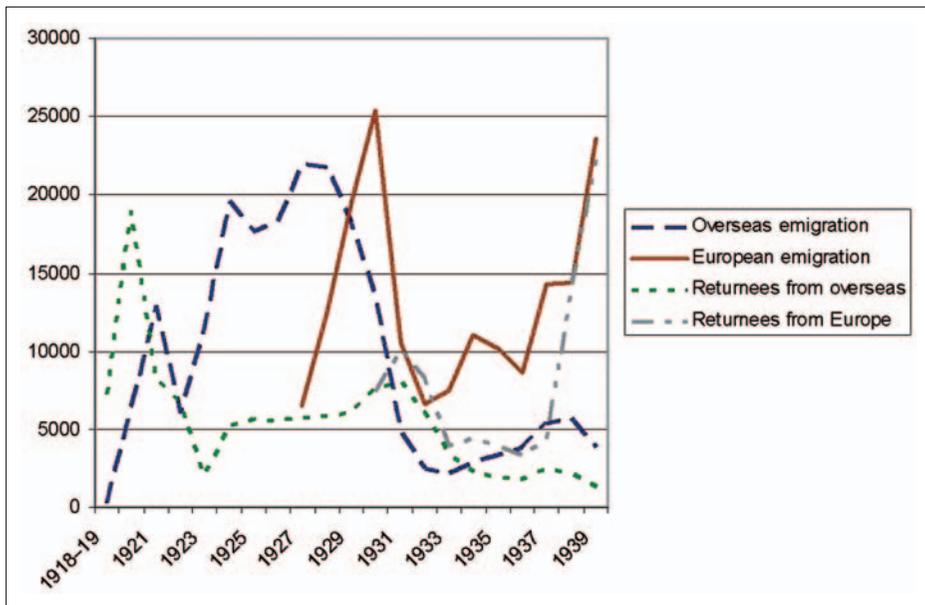


Figure 1. Emigration and returns in the Kingdom of SHS/Yugoslavia, 1918–1939.

Source: *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929* (Belgrade 1932), 122; *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1938/39* (Belgrade 1940), 137–9.