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## *The Reasons for the Emigration of Croats to South America Between 1880–1914 and Their Impact in the Political Context*



### **Emigration as a Political Problem**

Stephen Castles suggests that “migration policy grows out of the government’s belief that migration can be turned on and off like a tap by appropriate policy settings”<sup>1</sup>. The political activities and legal regulations created in the field of emigration by the state, both in the sphere of internal affairs and in the international environment, show whether the government wants to reduce or increase the number of people leaving the country. Authorities must guarantee their citizens the necessary living conditions to keep them in their homeland. Otherwise, the decision to leave is only a matter of time. They start looking for a place where they can find employment and will not be discriminated against or repressed for political reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> S. CASTLES, *The Factors That Make and Unmake Migration Policies*, “International Migration Review” 38, 2004, p. 858.

Mass emigration thus becomes a way of solving political problems that state authorities do not deal with, intentionally or not. Migrants become political actors acting in their own interest, they gain a political identity and become the object of politics<sup>2</sup>. Magdalena Lesińska describes several conditions for politicisation to occur:

the problem must have political significance (cause political consequences or have consequences that are important in political life). Secondly, it must be recognized as requiring the intervention (regulation) of state institutions (through legal acts or taking specific political actions) and, consequently, become the subject of state policy. Third, it must be the cause of a polarisation (political dispute) in which the parties (e.g. political parties) represent separate positions<sup>3</sup>.

Migrations are inherent in politics – they are caused by political actions (or the lack of them) of the authorities of the countries from which people are leaving, but also by those to which they come. They also generate specific political consequences for both. They are motivated by various factors and lead to specific political actions. One of the consequences may be the formation of a politically motivated community. Political emigrants are people that are leaving their homeland because of political reasons and creating a political community in the new place of living (with the goal of changing the situation in their homeland).

I will try to answer questions regarding the political motives of Croats leaving their homeland between 1880–1914, such as: what was the attitude of the authorities of Austria-Hungary to the phenomenon of migration flows, how and to what extent did the state try to control it, what measures were attempted to regulate migration flows, and what were its consequences? In addition, I will describe how and why countries in South America tried to attract Croats to settle there. Finally, I want to show how this emigration wave was the starting point for the rise of a Croatian political community abroad.

### **The First Wave of Migration (1880–1914). Political Reasons for Leaving the Country**

The most common statement is that in the first wave of emigration (1880–1914) economic reasons were the main motivator for Croats to leave their homeland. In fact, the causes were various, but I will try to prove that they were mainly

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<sup>2</sup> S. CASTLES, M. J. MILLER, *Immigrants and Politics*, [in:] *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, eds. S. CASTLES, M. J. MILLER, New York 2003, p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> M. LESIŃSKA, *Upolitycznienie emigracji i diaspory. Analiza dyskursu politycznego w Polsce w latach 1991–2015*, "Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny" 3, 2016, p. 14.

political. It should be noted that the term “political emigration” (*politička emigracija*) is most often used for the period from 1945 to 1990. This is an inadequate definition, however, because all the waves of emigration, including the first one that started in 1880 and the second one (1918–1939), included political emigrants.

In the case of Croatia, the departure of more than several thousand people from a given region was a mass emigration, because such an outflow of people had a significant impact on the socio-economic and political situation of Croatia. We can talk about a mass emigration from Croatia<sup>4</sup> already in the 1880s. At that time Croatia was a part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Economic policy was a kind of political struggle because deliberately not taking steps to improve a bad economic situation or creating worse conditions for a specific national group is a political action of the state authorities aimed at gaining permanent domination over a particular nation. Croats were leaving the country because of political repressions.

Dalmatia, from which the largest number of people emigrated in the wave discussed in this paper<sup>5</sup>, was formally part of the Kingdom of Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia. It was isolated from Croatia proper and state authorities attempted to subordinate it to Austria's political and strategic goals. The monarchy was interested in Dalmatia mainly due to its unused strategic location. In Trieste and Venice there were ports participating in trade, where increasingly modern ships became competition for traditional Dalmatian sailing ships (which was one of the secondary reasons for the emigration of the local people – traditional shipping was replaced by steamboats)<sup>6</sup>.

Moreover, Dalmatia was not linked by rail to other parts of the monarchy, so all commercial traffic passed through Trieste. In this way, the region was dependent on the actions and help of the Austrian authorities, which became the most important political reason for the emigration of Croats from this area. Industry was dominated by foreign capital (Italian and Austrian), not local. Natural resources, such as trees from deforestation, were exported without processing; the Croatian countryside was seen as backward and, in accordance with the policy of the authorities, it was supposed to stay that way. This means that the authorities consciously created an unfavourable, politically-motivated economic policy. By

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<sup>4</sup> In this paper I describe massive overseas migration between 1880–1914 when Croats wanted to reach South America. This wave was later called, due to its pioneering character, “old emigration” (*staro iseljništvo*). There was of course mass migration before that period, due to expansion of the Ottoman Empire, however, at that time Croats did not go to countries in other continents.

<sup>5</sup> Massive emigration from the Banate of Croatia and Slavonia began later, in the 1890s, but did not reach such proportions as from Dalmatia.

<sup>6</sup> B. BANOVIĆ, *Emigracijska politika Austro-Ugarske*, “Migracijske teme” 3–4, 1987, p. 315–316.

using tools related to economic issues, they pursued a political plan to discourage Croats from staying in areas under their jurisdiction.

Another factor was the obligation to pay taxes, the amount of which was not adjusted to the economic regression prevailing in the monarchy. Stjepan Radić observed:

the Habsburg monarchy and other countries in the region of the Danube River expect taxes from their citizens according to the most modern system [...], while the state and society compete in this modernity, trader and craftsman, and especially the peasant in the entire area of Podunavlje, have the same level of awareness and knowledge as fifty or a hundred years ago. Therefore, there must have been a dichotomy between needs and cultural means, and the lower classes in such situations try to escape. This escape already covered the most fertile parts of Croatia and Hungary<sup>7</sup>.

Due to the need to pay off debts, many Croats decided to obtain funds for this purpose abroad.

Another important factor – also of an economic and political nature – that affected the exodus at that time was the wine trade agreement (*vinska klauzula*), signed between Austria-Hungary and Italy in 1891. As a result, Italian wine from Lombardy and Venice – cheaper than wine produced in Dalmatia – was imported to the area of the monarchy, which led to the collapse of Dalmatian vineyards (aggravated by an arrival of grapevine disease, phylloxera, in 1894). In this way, the declining trade of the aforementioned product forced Croats to seek employment abroad<sup>8</sup>. It was a form of economic and political activity – Austria-Hungary did not care about the interests of the inhabitants of Dalmatia, deliberately acted against them, and eliminated a source of income that was popular in this region.

By weakening the economy and isolating the region where most of the Croatian emigrants from this wave came from, the Austro-Hungarian authorities took specific political actions. Undoubtedly, the economic factor<sup>9</sup> had a huge impact on the mass migrations of Croats, but it was caused by the deliberate political activity of the Austro-Hungarian authorities. They contributed to the intensification of the emigration process to prevent the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia and Slavonia and the Slavic lands inside the monarchy.

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<sup>7</sup> S. RADIĆ, *Moderna kolonizacija i Slaveni*, Zagreb 1904, p. 337.

<sup>8</sup> I. ČIZMIĆ, *Iseljavanje iz Hrvatske u Ameriku kao dio europskih migracijskih tijekova*, "Društvena istraživanja: časopis za opća društvena pitanja" 7.1–2, 1998, p. 135.

<sup>9</sup> In the Croatian language there is an expression connected to economic migration – *trbuhom za kruhom* – it means that somebody is leaving the country to improve their material circumstances and to feed themselves and their families.

The monarchical authorities did not want to prevent the exodus of Croats, but to control it. Their attitude towards the resettlement of the Slavs to European or overseas countries significantly differed from the attitude towards the departures of the inhabitants of Austrian and Hungarian origin. Attempts to denationalise Croats (Germanization, Magyarization and Italianization) are another aspect of the planned operation of the monarchy that made them emigrate. The goal here was to equate the number of Dalmatian inhabitants of Croatian origin with the number of Austrians and Hungarians flowing there<sup>10</sup>. Consequently, it would facilitate the process of homogenization and permanent appropriation of this territory by the monarchy. The political transformations gradually taking place among the southern Slavs – strengthening national consciousness, the emergence of national political institutions, the developing idea of Pan-Slavism and the creation of nation states – brought an additional potential threat of the monarchy losing power over the area inhabited by them.

The oppressive policy of Austria-Hungary towards the area where Croats lived was one of the main reasons for emigration. Ante Radić wrote in 1902 that what was happening to the Croatian nation was not displacement, but destruction<sup>11</sup>. The editors of the newspaper *Domovina* (*Motherland*) accused authorities: “If Austria had a little love for us Croats, we would not be wandering around the world, but in the land of our ancestors, we would live peacefully and content”<sup>12</sup>.

The Austro-Hungarian monarchy considered potential armed conflicts dangerous and wanted to protect itself against them. The escape of young people from military duty is another, no less important reason for emigration. Young men who did not identify themselves with the military/political interests of the monarchy decided to avoid this obligation<sup>13</sup>. Those who emigrated, however, were obliged to return to their homeland when called upon, otherwise they would be declared deserters<sup>14</sup>. In addition, before the First World War, due to the interest in increasing defense capabilities, the authorities wanted to stop the possible outflow of potential soldiers, regardless of their nationality.

It was mentioned that Croats emigrated mainly from Dalmatia, but this does not mean that their position in the Hungarian part of the monarchy was better, especially because of the destructive policy of Ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry and the progressive process of Magyarization of the Croatian population. The Ban decided to stop Croatian state-building activities and used political coercion against

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<sup>10</sup> B. BANOVIĆ, *Emigracijska politika...*, p. 314.

<sup>11</sup> A. RADIĆ, [without title], “Dom” 6, 27.03.1902.

<sup>12</sup> *Austrijski pioniri u Punta Arenas*, “Domovina” 162, 30.05.1913.

<sup>13</sup> It is important to note that there were many for whom it was a privilege to be in the army.

<sup>14</sup> According to the law on military duty (11.04.1889, *Zakon od 11.04.1889. kojim se uvodi novi zakon vojeni*).

the opposition parties<sup>15</sup>. Khuen-Héderváry supported the development of Serbian elites and increased their participation in politics, as well as adopted a resolution of Sabor (*Zakon o uređenju posalah crkve grčko-iztočne i uporabi ćirilice u Kraljevini Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, so called *Srpski zakon*) in 1887, thanks to which the Serbian Orthodox Church in Banska Croatia had the right, among others, to teach in schools, and confirmed the equality of the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets<sup>16</sup>. The implementation of these initiatives was supervised by the government in Hungary, which meant breaking the principles of the autonomy of Croatia<sup>17</sup>.

The Croatian-Serbian conflict was fuelled by the monarchy government. Croats did not know whether they should ally with Serbs and form a front against the Habsburgs or try to gain sovereignty without their support – they could not decide on a path until 1918. Differences in the vision of nation states and the role of Serbs and Croats after the creation of an independent state also had an influence on the divisions of Croatian emigrants in South America.

Due to the increasing number of Croats deciding to emigrate, the monarchy's authorities gradually created institutions and legislation<sup>18</sup> to control the emigration process. It is impossible to talk about an official emigration policy during the described period. It was rather a slow observation of peoples' migration, especially in the face of war threats<sup>19</sup>.

Austria-Hungary saw no reason to stop the emigration process, especially as it was financially beneficial for them. Thanks to the emigrants' money sent to the country, some regions were revived<sup>20</sup>. In the *Domovina* newspaper, the edi-

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<sup>15</sup> The Ban forced people to use the Hungarian language, he opened Hungarian schools, only Hungarian workers could take part in the construction of railways (according to the principle "who owns the railroads, owns the land"), and only Hungarian authorities controlled institutions connected with taxes, postal and economic services. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that the Ban inspired modernization processes in Croatia. Many public buildings were built – schools, museums, cultural societies, banks, academy of sciences and arts, municipal sewage systems. We can say that it was a period of economic and cultural development of Croatia, but simultaneously the Ban carried out the process of Magyarization of the country.

<sup>16</sup> M. GABELICA, *Ćirilica u banskoj Hrvatskoj od druge polovice 19. stoljeća do Prvoga svjetskog rata*, "Historijski zbornik" 67.1, 2014, p. 151–174.

<sup>17</sup> T. RAJČIĆ, *Srpski list (glas) o hrvatskoj politici u banskoj Hrvatskoj 80. godina 19. stoljeća*, "Časopis za suvremenu povijest" 35.3, 2003, p. 949.

<sup>18</sup> Croatia could not pursue its own emigration policy; it had to adapt to common Austro-Hungarian regulations, which was made difficult by the fact that Austria did not have its own regulations in this area, and Hungarian interests were contrary to Croatian.

<sup>19</sup> From the early 1880s, Russia was the main opponent of the monarchy.

<sup>20</sup> For example, emigrants financed the renovation or construction of schools or hospitals in their birthplaces from their own resources.

tors asked “why was there no state bankruptcy and where do the funds for new expenses come from?” They also rushed to answer – Austria received 67 million crowns from overseas emigrants in 1903, and on the eve of the war this amount had increased to 500 million crowns. They emphasised that the monarchy will support emigration because the country will benefit from it<sup>21</sup>.

The Austro-Hungarian authorities tried to isolate Dalmatia from the rest of Croatian lands, concluded agreements unfavourable for Croats, which deprived them of their basic means of subsistence, introduced high taxes and carried out progressive Germanization and Magyarization (leading to denationalisation). Industry was dominated by foreign capital: Italian and Austrian in Dalmatia and Istria, as well as Austrian and Hungarian in Slavonia and Croatia. Croatian identity and autonomy were attacked by imposing the use of Hungarian on Croatian railways, and Italian as the official language in Dalmatia, for example. The monarchy used indirect economic pressure, from cultural pressure to open political struggle and constant attempts at denationalisation (Magyarization, Germanization) in an effort to precipitate the process of emigration from all Slavic areas<sup>22</sup>. The goal was to weaken the Slavs, while strengthening the Austrians and Hungarians as well as an attempt to reduce the number of people of Slavic origin in the monarchy.

In addition, the influence of the monarchy in fuelling the Croatian-Serbian conflict, which was supposed to weaken a potential two-state alliance to overthrow Austria-Hungary, cannot be unmentioned. Political divisions among both Serbs and Croats and the display of anti-Croatian and anti-Serbian attitudes did not facilitate unification for the common goal of overthrowing the monarchy.

Moreover, the monarchy authorities did not agree to appoint a Croatian representative in South American countries, explaining that there was no suitable and sufficiently educated person for this position. The functions of the persons to represent Croats in South America were mainly performed by Austrians and Italians, who not only did not understand their problems and did not want to be involved in solving them but also did not use the Croatian language. Thus, animosity towards Austrian and Italian representatives in Dalmatia moved abroad and became permanent among Croatian emigrants. The Croatian politician, Juraj Biankini, spoke in the Croatian parliament on 7 March 1913 about the need to engage at least one person speaking Croatian in actions for Croats abroad. He also recalled similar interpellations in 1908 and 1910 with the lack of response from the parliament in Vienna to these requests<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> *Tko je spasio Austriju od državno bankrota*, “Domovina” 203–204, 29.03.1914.

<sup>22</sup> B. BANOVIĆ, *Emigracijska politika...*, p. 314.

<sup>23</sup> J. BIANKINI, *Jezik kod austro-ugarskih konsulata*, “Domovina” 157, 26.04.1913.



The earliest diplomatic representations were established in the countries where Croats were the most numerous (Argentina, Chile, Brazil). The emigrants were not satisfied with the institution of honorary consuls because they wanted to see someone in this position who spoke Croatian and was aware of their situation, but repeatedly these people did not fulfill their expectations<sup>24</sup>. It was also a form of repressive and unfair treatment against Croats who already lived abroad.

### **The Policy of South American Countries for Attracting Croats to New Living Places**

In South America, Croats settled mainly in countries such as Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, and, to a much lesser extent, Peru, Venezuela, Bolivia and Uruguay. An extremely important role was played by the immigration policy of South American countries as it focused on attracting as many potential settlers as possible. During the first wave of emigration from Croatia (1880–1914), South American states turned from colonies into independent states. Their authorities were aware that due to the abolition of slavery and the lack of manpower, emigrants from Europe would provide help not only in the form of labour, but also the transfer of new technologies.

Numerous agents working in Austria-Hungary offered help in organising the trips. Their job was to convince people to leave their homeland and to assure them that the living conditions in the country to which they wanted to go were much better than in the monarchy. An example of such an agency was *Mašek i drug*. The agents' task was to present potential newcomers with what the South American states offered. Of course, the proposals to these people were full of promises and amenities for their families. In this case, we are referring to the organised immigration policy of South American countries. In a political sense, the agents primarily represented the interests of South American states, which were simultaneously linked to the political goals of Austro-Hungary that did not care about the outflow of Croats.

In Argentina in 1895, 25.5% of the population were foreigners<sup>25</sup>. This happened, *inter alia*, thanks to the policy of "to govern is to populate" (*gobernar es poblar*), understood as settling the country with white people so they could educate the local population and guarantee progress. Such legal provisions were included

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<sup>24</sup> M. MIRKOVIĆ, *Ekonomska historija Jugoslavije*, Zagreb 1958, p. 124.

<sup>25</sup> A. KAGANIEC-KAMIEŃSKA, *Polityka imigracyjna wybranych państw Ameryki Łacińskiej na przełomie XIX i XX w.*, "Studia Migracyjne – Przegląd Polonijny" 4, 2012, p. 61.



in the Argentinian constitution, and in the country's immigration law. The Argentinian government preferred people employed in agriculture, and they did not accept people over 60 or sick. Emigrants had basic civil rights (including freedom of association, right to property, and freedom of religion); they also had the right to vote in municipal elections and they could obtain citizenship under a simplified procedure, but they were not obliged to do so.

Brazil also issued a decree in 1890 that Asians and Africans cannot enter the country<sup>26</sup>. This state used two models of immigration policy: they created agricultural colonies (both during the colonial period and after independence) and plantations<sup>27</sup>. Brazil offered a free steamboat cruise<sup>28</sup> and financed accommodation in a migrant shelter. The newcomers were obliged to work in agriculture for at least two years, otherwise they were repatriated at their own expense. Before that time they were not allowed to buy land that they received on a lease. After the elapsed time, they could ask the authorities to buy it on a loan that was granted for ten years. The liabilities could not be repaid sooner than after six years (even if the emigrant had the necessary sum of money)<sup>29</sup>.

Work on plantations was associated with the problem of exploitation. Slavery in Brazil was abolished in 1888, which is why local landowners did not understand that newcomers had to be treated like local employees. In many cases, the conditions in which the emigrants worked were awful and in no way resembled the visions the agents presented<sup>30</sup>.

In Chile, immigration policy during this period was not well organised. Liberal laws guaranteed equal rights to emigrants and local residents (without privileged classes), and freedom of association and press (no preventive censorship). The minimum requirements for emigrants required to work and live in Chile were that they are healthy, able to write, and to work; there were no conditions regarding the age of these people. Women and children joining a family member had to have an invitation from them, and single women coming to work were obligated to submit a contract from the employer<sup>31</sup>.

Due to unreliable data on emigrants before the Second World War, we are unable to say with certainty how many Croats left Croatia between 1880–1914.

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<sup>26</sup> Brazil changed its mind two years later with regard to China and Japan, when the number of Europeans turned out to be insufficient.

<sup>27</sup> A. KAGANIEC-KAMIEŃSKA, *Polityka imigracyjna wybranych...*, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 63.

<sup>29</sup> J. ANIĆ, *Jugoslavenski iseljenici u Brazilu*, "Migracijske teme" 4, 1988, p. 399.

<sup>30</sup> M. KULA, *Historia Brazylii*, Wrocław 1987, p. 98–100.

<sup>31</sup> M. PERIĆ, *Aspekti integracije i adaptacije hrvatskih iseljenika u Čileu*, "Migracijske i etničke teme" 20.2–3, 2004, p. 245.

Statistics on migration outside the monarchy were recorded from 1899 onwards<sup>32</sup>. Researchers dealing with the analyses of this period say that they did not take into account illegal emigration, which means that up to 500,000 Croats could have left the country in the aforementioned period. Ljubomir Antić reports that in that period around 25,000–50,000 Croats came to Argentina<sup>33</sup>. According to Lakatoš, who lived in Chile until 1914, 25,000 Croats lived there<sup>34</sup>. In Brazil, in the shelter for emigrants, among 31,169 people registered as Austrians between 1882 and 1918, 3,698 (12%) were identified as Croats<sup>35</sup>. Such a number of people leaving the country proves that firstly, it was a mass emigration, secondly, that the monarchy's policy brought the expected results.

Making the decision to leave was the first step towards a new life in an unknown place. Regardless of the promises made by the agents or the South American states themselves, the actual living and working conditions were verified upon arrival. An essential problem of Croats after their arrival in South America turned out to be the fact that they were not highly educated and did not know Spanish, therefore they could do mostly physical work (although it was also the case for the well-educated ones at the very beginning, until they achieved higher social position).

Croats in South America organised themselves in colonies. They usually came from the same city or region, had the same profession, but they were also linked by various family ties. They were meeting in shops, meeting houses and later in associations led by Croats. They had language, traditions and habits in common, the same as political beliefs and interests. In a very short time, Croats in South America had shown economic and entrepreneurial abilities, ensuring social advancement for themselves.

## The Foundations of the Croatian Political Community in South America

It was mentioned that Croats were organised on the basis of origin. However, this does not mean that they were always united by political views. In Argentina and Chile, they differed on issues related to the situation in their home country

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<sup>32</sup> M. SMREKAR, *Priručnik za političku upravnu službu u kraljevinah Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, vol. III, Zagreb 1902, p. 181.

<sup>33</sup> Lj. ANTIĆ, *Pokušaj stvaranja „Hrvatskog saveza” među našim iseljenicima u Južnoj Americi 1913. g.*, „Časopis za suvremenu povijest” 15.2, 1983, p. 43.

<sup>34</sup> J. LAKATOŠ, *Narodna statistika*, Osijek 1914, p. 76.

<sup>35</sup> M. PUH, R. CAVALHEIRO SILVA, *Broj useljavanja „Austrijanaca-Hrvata” u Brazil (1882–1918)*, [in:] *Hrvatska u Brazilu do 1918. Prva faza useljavanja*, ed. M. PUH, São Paulo 2017, p. 279.

and the possibility of changing it. Croatian emigrants coming to South America in the first wave came mainly from Dalmatia, which was part of Austria at that time.

In most cases, Croats supporting Austria-Hungary called themselves Austrians and had Austrian citizenship. People who refused to accept the position of Croats in the monarchy were called Croats/Slavs (they supported the idea of Ilirism and the national movement, emphasising its Slavic origin). Gradually this division, especially in Chile, was modified because Croats began to identify themselves as Yugoslavs. Ljubomir Antić emphasises that, among the emigrants in South America, there was a division into Croats and Austrians that disappeared before the start of the First World War and both groups opted for a reunification of Dalmatia with the rest of the country<sup>36</sup>. Most Croatian emigrants stood against the monarchy at the beginning of the First World War and when they were called to the army to fight against Serbs. This does not mean that Croats were not divided into those supporting the joint struggle of the Slavs against Austria-Hungary and those who were afraid of such an alliance.

The way to identify certain political views was visible in the forms of associations. Croats gave organisations and newspapers Croatian or Slavic names (in the homeland there was a strengthening national movement, opting for the unification of Dalmatia with Croatia and Slavonia, supported by right-wing politicians). Croats also created organisations with Croatian names, for example, the Croatian Reading Room (*Hrvatska čitaonica*), and the Croatian Alliance (*Hrvatski savez*). Their members were in close contact with representatives of the movement in their home country, including Juraj Biankini. In Slavic-Croatian societies, their members used characteristic symbols – like the Croatian flag – spoke the Croatian language, celebrated holidays related to Croatian culture, and inside their associations were portraits of representatives of the national movement and patriots (in this context, the names most often appearing were Ante Starčević and Petar Preradović). In Austrian associations, Croats spoke Spanish and used the Austro-Hungarian flag. Their members had very good relations with official monarchy representatives in South America and celebrated the birthday of Franz Joseph I, whose portraits were displayed in many of these organisations. Examples of Austrian associations included: Austrian Mutual Aid Society (*Austrijsko društvo uzajamne pomoći*) in Chile or Austro-Hungarian Charitable Society (*Austro-Ugarsko dobrotvorno društvo*) in Peru.

By associating themselves, emigrants supported morally, politically and materially defined ideas. The names of their associations could also testify to the political convictions of their founders. In this way, they emphasised what political ideas they identified with. Associating in organisations was also important for the local

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<sup>36</sup> Lj. ANTIĆ, *Naše iseljeništvo u Južnoj Americi i stvaranje jugoslavenske države 1918*, Zagreb 1987, p. 41.

population, which – according to the emigrants – treated those who were able to unite with a more positive attitude and included Croats among the founders of the first colonies<sup>37</sup>. The position of Croatian emigrants was strengthened by demonstrating organisational skills. Until the outbreak of the First World War, there were about 40 societies in which Croats were active in South America.

Another form of political activity was publishing. By the First World War, Croats had created 14 newspapers in South American countries<sup>38</sup>. The political situation at home was the main reason for that and their authors wanted to have influence on its change<sup>39</sup>. The most popular journals were *Sloboda* (Freedom) and *Zajednica* (Community) published in Argentina or *Domovina* (Homeland) and *Pokret* (Movement) published in Chile. Their editors supported different political visions of the role of Croats both in the monarchy and after its collapse. The graphic design of the front pages had political meaning, and so did the newspapers names<sup>40</sup>. Until the outbreak of the First World War, most newspapers were published mainly in Croatian; in the interwar period, they were bilingual; and after the Second World War, they were published mainly in Spanish. Ljubomir Antić emphasises that all magazines became strong political institutions fighting to preserve a national consciousness and working against the monarchy<sup>41</sup>. Even those that initially supported Austria-Hungary started over time to stand for the idea of a common state for the Slavs. Croats in South America also manifested their political views through letters to newspapers published in their home country. They pointed out that they expected the authorities to change their attitude to Croats living under the monarchy and that they were following the political events taking place in the homeland.

Croats in South America supported compatriots in their homeland, organised protests and fundraisers, and created publications supporting the actions of Croats in their homeland against the monarchy. For example, 1903 was the period described as “revival of South American Croats”<sup>42</sup>. The situation that caused that was a ban on holding public assemblies issued by the Hungarian authorities, which

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<sup>37</sup> Dika nam je, “Male novine” 9, 14.05.1905.

<sup>38</sup> Lj. ANTIĆ, *Osnovne značajke hrvatskog iseljništva u Španjolskoj Južnoj Americi do prvog svjetskog rata*, “Migracijske teme” 4.4, 1988, p. 425.

<sup>39</sup> IDEM, *Pregled hrvatskog iseljeničkog novinstva u Južnoj Americi do Prvoga svjetskog rata*, “Radovi zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta u Zagrebu” 20.1, 1987, p. 103.

<sup>40</sup> Iconography and its meaning in newspapers could be the subject of a separate article. For example, the editors of the newspaper *Domovina* placed the coats of arms of Chile and the Triune Kingdom Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia in the centre of the title. There was a map of Chile on the left, a map of South Slavic countries on the right, connected by telephone lines.

<sup>41</sup> Lj ANTIĆ, *Naše iseljništvo u Južnoj Americi...*, p. 38.

<sup>42</sup> IDEM, *Hrvatsko iseljništvo u Južnoj Americi*, “Migracijske teme” 4, 1988, p. 418.

was followed by protests. At the railway station in Zaprešić, Croats set fire to the Hungarian flag. As a result, one person was killed and several were injured.

The increasingly manifested political identity of the Croatian diaspora influenced the formation of a political community that fought to regain the autonomy of the homeland under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and later also its independence. The growing assimilation with the population of South American countries did not weaken the attachment to the homeland, even if it was the homeland of the ancestors.

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The decisions of the monarchy authorities led to an unequal treatment of Croats, who were often regarded as a minority with limited civil rights. Indeed, the authorities supported the Croats' departures from the country (if their presence did not represent a clear benefit, for example by increasing the defence force). Moreover, the territories inhabited by Croatian citizens were left without economic support and were less developed, and the authorities sought to establish their full jurisdiction there or make it possible for external forces to do so (for example, Italians or Serbs).

South American countries pursued a policy of attracting a new workforce, favorable from the perspective of the monarchy. Croatian emigrants who came to South America during the first wave of the exodus were divided into supporters of Austria-Hungary or Yugoslavism. Croatian political leaders wondered what relations with the monarchy should look like, how much autonomy Croats should fight for, and how to regulate relations with Serbs. Doubts about the solution of the "Croatian question" in the homeland were transferred to South America. Consequently, the diaspora also supported the political struggle for sovereignty, becoming a political community. They organised themselves into associations, created newspapers and showed support through writing letters to Croatian local magazines, organising protests and fundraising for compatriots.

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