Luka Pejić

Revolutionary Migrants of the Early Labor Movement in Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Istria in the Late Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Century

#3 / 2021 HISTORY IN FLUX PP. 79 - 102

Luka Pejić
University of Osijek, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of History, Osijek
luka.pejic.osijek@gmail.com

UDC 316.343:316.323.62-058.14(497.5)"18/19"
https://doi.org/10.32728/flux.2021.3.4
Original scientific paper

Revolutionary Migrants of the Early Labor Movement in Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Istria in the Late Nineteenth and the Early Twentieth Century

In the late nineteenth century, prompted by uneven industrial development, the predominantly agrarian regions of Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Istria were slowly undergoing processes of urbanization and economic transformation. As part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, these regions were subject to dynamic migrations of the labor force from several regions and neighboring countries. Industrialization was the crucial impetus behind the formation of the first working-class organizations and syndicates, but their development, their socio-political goals, and the strategies they employed were heavily influenced by socialist theoreticians and agitators from Austria-Hungary, Serbia, and Italy. This ideologically heterogeneous labor movement depended on cross-border cooperation with different individuals and collectives, ranging from Hungarian Marxists and Austrian social democrats to Italian anarchists. Even though unions and subversive pamphlets were illegal and closely monitored, migratory activists continued to agitate and collaborate with local workers through various underground channels. This paper will analyze various ideological inputs of migratory workers within the area that is now present-day Croatia during the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century. It will also examine the perception of their presence and activism articulated by political authorities and mainstream newspapers. Due to a lack of similar research, emphasis will be placed, to some extent, on anarchist activities in this area.

KEYWORDS:
labor movement, history of socialism, anarchists, migrants, nineteenth century, Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, Istria

As Jürgen Osterhammel notes, during the nineteenth century, Europe "saw the transition from the traditional to the rational state." In his words, "this was bound up with the construction of bureaucracies and the expansion of state activity."[1] The second half of the nineteenth century in particular was marked by a decisive phase in the transformation of the premodern economic, social, and political practices in the area that is now modern Croatia.[2] The dissolution of feudalism in the late 1840s was followed by a slow-paced introduction of capitalism, complex administrative reorganization, and gradual modernization in several spheres (e.g., the judicial and education systems, most notably during the 1870s). In the second half of the nineteenth century, members of the newly emerged bourgeois economic elite, which included merchants, industrialists, bankers, and construction entrepreneurs, were the most eager advocates of modernization in Croatia after the collapse of neo-absolutism.[3] At the same time, inefficient preindustrial production was deeply rooted in the regional economy due to apparent financial risks, a lack of necessary transport infrastructure, and a lack of qualified workers, which all presented serious challenges for potential investors. Nevertheless, extensive reforms enacted in Croatia-Slavonia by Ivan Mažuranić's government (1873–80), eventually resulted in the abandonment of the semifeudal economic system, the establishment of credit institutions, and investments of German, French, and Belgian capital into the exploitation of available natural resources (such as Slavonian forests). These all played crucial roles in the modernization of Austria-Hungary's southeastern periphery at the turn of the last century.[4]

Arijana Kolak Bošnjak explains that the modernization processes in Istria and Dalmatia were extremely slow, which was evident through sluggish industrialization and urbanization and the slow democratization of political life. Civil society in Dalmatia only began to develop in the second half of the nineteenth century but at a somewhat slower pace than in Croatia-Slavonia. The industrial type of civil society was missing in Dalmatia, as were significant industrial centers, until almost the beginning of the twentieth century. The number of workers in Dalmatian cities increased throughout the second half

---

1 Jürgen Osterhammel, *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Patrick Camiller (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 614.

2 Following the constructive remark made by Stefan Petrungaro, published in the article "Popular Protest Against Hungarian Symbols in Croatia (1883–1903). A Study in Visual History," *Cultural and Social History* (2016): 13, no. 4, note 1, I find it necessary to explain that this paper will analyze various developments in Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia and Istria. While Croatia-Slavonia formed what was known as the Ban's Croatia." these provinces belonged to the Hungarian part of the empire between 1868 and 1918. Conversely, Dalmatia and Istria were under the Austrian administration (despite the fact that Dalmatia was, at least symbolically, included in the concept of Triune Kingdom). Therefore, when using the term "Croatia" or "Croatian" I will specifically refer to Croatia-Slavonia administration or Ban's Croatia. In other cases, I will write about present-day Croatian territories (or simply, today's Croatia) which include both Dalmatia and Istria.

3 Arijana Kolak Bošnjak, "Struktura hrvatskog društva u 19. stoljeću i razvoj građanskog društva," in *Temelji moderne Hrvatske. Hrvatske zemlje u „dugom" 19. stoljeću*, ed. Vlasta Švoger and Jasna Turkalj (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2016), 145.

4 See: Iván Tibor Berend and György Ránki, *Evropska periferija i industrijalizacija 1780. - 1914*. (Zagreb: Naklada Naprijed, 1996), 34, 216.

of the nineteenth century, but they were primarily associated with crafts. The structure of labor eventually changed in favor of industrial workers several years before the Great War. In Istria, however, it is important to note that in this period, Pula became the main Austrian naval base, and the city developed into an urban center with increasing numbers of workers, craftsmen, merchants, and officials. According to Kolak Bošnjak, the influence of such cities was also notable in small towns and in the countryside, where "capitalist relations penetrated more deeply, resulting in a stratification of rural society," whose population was generally poor, hungry, and illiterate.[5]

The definite affirmation of capitalism brought new existential concerns for the heterogeneous working class that inhabited several urban centers. At first, in the late 1860s and early 1870s, loosely organized workers in places such as Osijek, Zagreb, and Rijeka raised their voices to demand higher wages and reduced working hours.[6] Despite the extreme repression of strikers and socialist agitators through expulsion or incarceration, the labor movement in continued to evolve toward a more complex political stage characterized by union actions and demands for political participation, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly. This process was also influenced by numerous external factors such as prevailing trends within the International Workingmen's Association, specific organizational developments among Austrian and Hungarian activists, and even migrations of radicalized Italian workers to and along the eastern Adriatic. Although there was an evident lack of somewhat original domestic socialist ideas throughout the nineteenth century[7] (largely due to an almost complete lack of support from an intelligentsia mostly attracted to contemporary

5 Kolak Bošnjak, "Struktura hrvatskog društva u 19. stoljeću i razvoj građanskog društva," 146-48.

6 For example, even in the late 1880s workers employed in Croatian saw-mills, printing offices and glass factories worked up to fifteen hours a day. See: Ivan Kovačević, *Ekonomski položaj radničke klase u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji 1867. – 1914.* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Export-press, 1972), 84.

7 However, one should keep in mind that several intellectuals from the northern Adriatic region, such as Angelo Vivante or Giuseppina Martinuzzi, made noticeable contributions to socialism in Istria before the First World War, usually after they had moved beyond notions of Italian irredentism. Vivante edited an influential socialist newspaper *Il Lavoratore* for two years (1907–1909). Also, with his book *Irredentisimo adriatico* (1912), he was one of the first authors who tried to apply the Marxist framework of analysis when describing the economic conditions underlying the intricate national animosities in Istria. Martinuzzi, on the other hand, dedicated her public work to issues like the emancipation of women and the eradication of child labor. She authored a poetry collection, *Ingiustizia*, first published in 1907, which emphasized her faith in the workers' revolutionary movement. One of her most recognizable positions was a resolute rejection of any form of nationalist chauvinism to the detriment of solidarity and mutual assistance among nations. In 1921 Martinuzzi joined the Communist Party of Italy. In her acclaimed work on "women who stepped into history."," Lydia Sklevicky articulates a feminist view of Martinuzzi's lifework thusly: "Giuseppina Martinuzzi is always non-doctrinally sensitive to the existence of sexual antagonisms (misunderstandings and violence) of proletarian women and men. When explaining the double exploitation of women and women's labor, she dismisses accusations of unfair competition and exposes the class and supra-class oppression of women." Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Zagreb: Druga, 1996), 226.

nationalist concepts),[8] the area was nevertheless flooded with subversive pamphlets (usually written in German, Hungarian, or Italian) and agitators from other parts of the monarchy—and occasionally other European countries—who advocated revolutionary activities. Also, representatives of workers employed in the cities occasionally traveled to participate in socialist gatherings in Austria, Hungary, and other European countries, and slowly extended their collaborative network on the basis of internationalism. At one of these gatherings in January 1893, Ivan Ancel, a Croatian delegate to the Second Congress of the Social Democratic Party of Hungary, stated that socialists did not see "a river of blood" between Croats and Hungarians. "Those who still support hatred do it to deter ignorant people from the rights that are rightfully theirs," he said.[9]

Eventually, industrial development and an obvious need for a skilled workforce resulted in mass labor migrations to Croatian cities. As some sources point out, from 1904 to 1910, about 20,000 workers immigrated to Croatia-Slavonia looking for jobs in crafts, industry, trade, and transportation. Approximately 65 percent of them came from Hungary, followed by Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and to a lesser extent, other Balkan and European countries. Of this number, as many as 10,234 immigrants or almost half of the foreign workers went to Osijek.[10]

Large numbers of workers from other regions or neighboring countries sometimes provoked xenophobia among the locals, who would threaten violence if foreigners were hired instead of them. This was the case in Osijek in the summer of 1894, when furious builders and other workers tried to publicly intimidate city authorities by threatening a bloodbath and even war if outsiders were employed.[11] Understandably, fights would occasionally break out between rival ethnic groups of workers. As one newspaper reported in 1906, several laborers from Osijek taunted, attacked, and injured foreign workers in a local pub.[12] Somewhat more civilized in its efforts was a group of about fifty workers from Zagreb who, in the spring of 1883, signed a petition "against intolerable [foreign] competition," which primarily consisted of bricklayers, stonemasons, and carpenters who had come to the Croatian capital from Italy. Supported by press, this dissatisfied group appealed to the government, claiming that "foreigners" were taking bread from the mouths of local workers who were consequently forced to emigrate "to far-away places."[13] Of course, distrust of the "foreign" workforce was also closely related to these men being used as strikebreakers on multiple occasions to weaken the locals' collective struggles.[14] Sometimes this provoked outbreaks of violence, a phenomenon not exclusively reserved for urban centers. This was the case in

8 Vlado Oštrić, "Radnički pokret u Hrvatskoj od 1867. do početka XX. stoljeća," Časopis *za suvremenu povijest* 13, no. 2 (1981): 20.

9 Vitomir Korać, *Povjest radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Radnička komora za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju, 1930), 112-13.

10 Kovačević, *Ekonomski položaj radničke klase*, 265-66.

11 Ive Mažuran, ed., *Građa o radničkom pokretu Osijeka i Slavonije: 1867-1894* (Osijek: Historijski arhiv u Osijeku, 1967), 407.

12 "Tučnjava i izgredi," *Narodna obrana*, Osijek, June 7, 1906.

13 "O štićenju domaćega obrta," *Narodne novine*, Zagreb, April 18, 1883.

14 Kovačević, *Ekonomski položaj radničke klase*, 378.

Zagorje in mid-1904, when peasants employed at a particular farm destroyed an crops and an entire vineyard when the estate's owner answered their demands for higher wages by hiring foreign workers.[15] In 1911, the same tactic was deployed by employers when they successfully ended a miners' strike in Labin by bringing in replacements from Hungary.[16] It should also be taken into consideration that in some industrial facilities, domestic and foreign workers were segregated, at least in terms of housing, which decreased the chances for them to communicate and led to different daily routines. For instance, foreigners made up 16 percent of the workforce at a fabric factory in Duga Resa in 1888,[17] and they were housed together in separate accommodations adjacent to the factory, where they would eat, rest, and sleep.[18]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in addition to being exposed to rather frequent strikes, the immigrant workforce was used by some newspapers to argue that "the seed of socialism" was being sown among Croatian workers by foreign elements, meaning German and Hungarian agitators. According to *Narodna obrana*, a daily newspaper from Osijek, local workers were being "seduced" by foreign activists who exploited their unenviable economic position by turning them away from Croatian national sentiments.[19] However, regional disparities in industrial development and the proximity of Hungarian, Italian, and other urban hubs of various socialist collectives had a range of effects on labor actions in this area. For example, activists in Slavonian cities established communication channels with branches of the International Workingmen's Association and its associates as early as 1871 in Osijek[20] and 1874 in Brod na Savi. In most cases, they would usually secretly collaborate with Hungarian communists from Budapest, then described by authorities as members of the illegal "Social Democratic Party," such as Leó Frankel, who used them to distribute his weekly *Arbeiter Wochen-Chronik*.[21] Later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a number of workers from Istria and industrially backward Dalmatia turned to quite active Italian-speaking anarchists from Trieste and, most notably, radicals within the Germinal group.[22]

15 "Pobunili se seljaci," *Virovitičan*, Virovitica, June 12, 1904.

16 Petar Strčić, ed., *Radnički pokret i NOB općine Labin* (Rijeka: Skupština općine Labin; Centar za historiju radničkog pokreta i NOR-a Istre, Hrvatskog primorja i Gorskog kotara, 1980), 30.

17 The factory in Duga Resa employed 360 men and women in 1888, of whom 60 were described as "foreign workers".

18 "Tvornice u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji," *Narodne novine*, Zagreb, April 4, 1888.

19 "Poslije štrajka," *Narodna obrana*, Osijek, May 18, 1905.

20 Dušan Plećaš, *Prvomajske proslave u Osijeku* (Osijek: Centar za kulturu i umjetnost Narodnog sveučilišta Božidar Maslarić, 1973), 8-9.

21 Josip Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj - od prvih radničkih društava do osnivanja Socialdemokratske stranke (1880. – 1895.)*, vol. 1 (Zagreb: Savez sindikata Jugoslavije – Republičko vijeće za Hrvatsku, 1958), 23-4.

22 Luka Pejić, *Historija klasičnog anarhizma u Hrvatskoj – fragmenti subverzije* (Zagreb: DAF, 2016), 104-05. One could argue that these early contacts of the Istrian and Dalmatian proletariat with anarchism, as well as later suffering under Fascist rule, undoubtedly made a strong social impact and paved the way for anarchist individuals from this area like Nikola Turčinović, Luigi Križaj, Lodovico Sestan, Antonio Bencović, and Pietro Cociancich, who later participated in the Spanish Civil War. For more on this see: Marino Budicin et al, ed., *Naši španjolski dobrovoljci,* Historica Nova, vol. III (Rijeka: Centar za historiju radničkog pokreta i NOR Istre, Hrvatskog primorja i Gorskog kotara, 1988).

Internationalism and Socialist Activism in the Late Nineteenth Century

Cross-border solidarity shaped late nineteenth century labor movements throughout Europe. By ending *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) with the line, "Working men of all countries, unite!"[23] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels proposed an internationalist approach to tackling the social and economic issues of the industrial era. Since the proletariat was perceived as a global class facing extreme capitalist exploitation, ideas about the necessity of founding labor organizations that would transcend existing borders and demand radical political change began to be more concrete in the 1860s. Therefore, up until the First World War,[24] both Internationals made prodigious contributions to the ideological molding of numerous labor movements and to the acknowledgment of the unique national contexts of all involved parties and trade unions.[25] Regarding this, Eric Hobsbawm describes the specific position of socialists in Austria:

> The powerful Austrian Social Democratic Party[26] was both notably militant and notably identified with Marxism, if only through the close personal friendship between its leader Victor Adler (1852–1918) and the old Engels. Indeed, Austria was the only country to produce a school of Marxism identified specifically with it: Austro-Marxism. In the Habsburg monarchy we enter, for the first time, a region in which the presence of Marxism in the general culture is undeniable, and the appeal of social democracy to intellectuals more than marginal. However, their ideology was, inevitably and profoundly, marked by that 'national problem' which determined the fate of the monarchy. Characteristically, Austrian Marxists were the first to analyse it systematically.[27]

23 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39.

24 According to some authors, the outbreak of the First World War uncovered the serious fragility of internationalist solidarity that had been previously passionately advocated by the leading European socialists. Ana Rajković reminds us that "the majority of European workers interpreted the Great War as a defensive war and responded positively to the calls of their national governments by joining the army in 1914. This led to the abandonment of the concept of proletarian internationalism, which had until then formed the backbone of the workers' movement." Ana Rajković, "Godina 1914. – napuštanje koncepta proleterskoga internacionalizma na primjeru ratne mobilizacije slavonskoga radništva," in *1914. Prva godina rata u Trojednoj Kraljevini i Austro-Ugarskoj Monarhiji*, ed. Vijoleta Herman Kaurić (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2018), 561.

25 When he writes about the establishment of the First International and its opening actions in the 1860s, in connection with the organization's attempts to block strike-breaking in some European countries, Marcel van der Linden also warns his readers about the more fitting terminology: "It is important to note that all cross-border solidarity in these cases was at a *sub-national level*. Because no national trade unions as yet existed, international contacts were always between local organizations in different countries. It was in fact a 'sub-national internationalism'". Marcel van der Linden, *Workers of the World: Essays Toward a Global Labor History*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 270.

26 Social Democratic Workers' Party of Austria was founded in 1889.

27 Eric Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World: Reflections on Marx and Marxism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 227. More about Austro-Marxism can be found here: William M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind. An Intellectual and Social History 1848 – 1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), chapter 6.

As a large, multiethnic monarchy saturated with the complexity of various administrative units and distinctive laws on association, Austria-Hungary produced labor associations that differed from region to region in their ideological reasoning and approaches to activism. However, what somehow linked many of the monarchy's urban centers in the second half of the nineteenth century was the emergence of self-help and educational working-class organizations, chiefly in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Pieter Judson explains the immediate consequences of this phenomenon as follows: "When these movements outgrew the political limits imagined for them by their benefactors, however, their liberal mentors often withdrew their support…In general, the police aggressively monitored and frequently shut down meetings of legal working-class associations."[28] From Bohemia to Dalmatia, the authorities' repressive approach to these issues was quite uniform and usually resulted in either jailing or expelling subversive individuals perceived by those in power to be a threat to public order.

As Vlado Oštrić emphasizes, Croatia-Slavonia belonged to the Central European space of labor mobility.[29] In that sense, as a transit area (especially for workers from Bosnia and Herzegovina after the military occupation in 1878), it both received workers from other countries and provided other countries with a labor force. Undoubtedly, these interrelated migratory processes reduced the backwardness of the local labor movement. The early Croatian socialists, according to Oštrić, did not reject ideas of national unification when insisting on social transformation. However, the fragmentation of Croatian territories within the Dual Monarchy (some parts belonged to the Austrian half and others to the Hungarian) led to the development of specific regional varieties of labor movements. Interestingly, Hungarian socialists considered the movement in Croatia-Slavonia, in general, to be part of the wider Hungarian movement.

In 1894 socialists from both countries finally agreed that Croatians could organize social-democratic political actions on their own. Activists from Syrmia, who had gathered around Vitomir Korać from Šid, received important ideological impulses from Belgrade at the end of the century, while leftist organizations from Trieste and Ljubljana made a serious impact in Istria and Dalmatia.[30] Thus, to make things even more complex, the Yugoslav Social-Democratic Party, founded in 1896 and mainly guided by Slovenes, planned to be active in the Austrian half of the monarchy, including the eastern Adriatic coast, in order to achieve the cultural and political unification of all South Slavs and, of course, to eradicate capitalism. In addition, Italians organized their own social-democratic platform in 1897 and planned activities in the

---

28 Pieter Judson, *Povijest Habsburškog Carstva* (Zagreb: Sandorf, 2018), 325.

29 Oštrić, "Radnički pokret," 16. It should be added that there are evident connections with Eastern Europe as well, as the story of a Serbian socialist agitator and author Vasilije Pelagić shows, which will be briefly discussed later on.

30 For more on the rise of social democracy and the labor movement in Istria from the mid-nineteenth century to the outbreak of the First World War, see Marina Cattaruza's well-known study *Socialismo adriatico: la socialdemocrazia di lingua italiana nei territori costieri della Monarchia asburgica: 1888-1915* (Rome: Piero Lacaita Editore, 1998).

Croatian Littoral and Dalmatia.[31] On top of that, Austrian social democracy exercised significant influence over activists from Croatia. There is evidence that Croatian workers subscribed to Austrian newspapers, and that in the 1880s and 1890s, labor representatives from urbanized areas in Croatia-Slavonia participated in socialist gatherings in Graz and other places. For example, Austrian newspapers organized fundraisers (e.g., the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* in 1893) to gather financial support for workers in Croatia, and, participants at the social-democratic congress in Vienna in March 1894 were informed of persecutions of labor activists that had taken place in Slavonia. Ana Rajković points out that Austrian social democracy's biggest influence on the movement in Croatia can be seen in the way general strikes were perceived as a means of social struggle: The Austrian social democrats' negative view of this type of mass action was also adopted by the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia and Slavonia.[32]

In this constellation of dynamic and intricate relations, socialists crossed multiple administrative borders within a rather narrow space to share their experiences and provide mutual support. They expanded their networks of underground camaraderie, frequently through different languages. Border-crossing was part of the essence of socialism.[33] Besides, the common economic Austro-Hungarian market certainly created favorable conditions for people to freely migrate and spread certain (revolutionary) ideas. "All historians know that traveling men, emigrants, and returning emigrants were the essence of early labour movements, since they provided so many of their cadres," wrote Hobsbawm.[34] One cannot but agree with this observation.

---

31 Oštrić, "Radnički pokret," 12-6. Dinko Foretić describes how national differences harmed the socialist movement in Istria at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although some socialist organizations in this region received solid support from the population over time, several years before the First World War, they slowly began to abandon the well-known internationalist principle of cooperation. According to Foretić, certain Italian socialists from Pula at that time undoubtedly began to "swim in irredentist-nationalist waters,." without even trying to address their Croatian-speaking comrades in their newspapers. Consequently, the circulation of the Italian socialist press declined somewhat among Croatian activists after 1907, prompting them to consider publishing their own newspaper. Eventually, *Glas radnoga naroda*, the first entirely Croatian socialist newspaper in Istria, was launched in 1910. Dinko Foretić, "Pregled socijalističke štampe u Dalmaciji, Istri i Rijeci do 1919," *Radovi* 10, no. 4 (1972): 192.

32 Ana Rajković, "Utjecaj austrijske socijaldemokracije u kontekstu razvoja radničkog pokreta na području Slavonije na prijelazu 19. u 20. stoljeće." in *DG Jahrbuch. Godišnjak njemačke zajednice* 22, ed. Renata Trischler (Osijek: Njemačka zajednica, 2015), 229-31.

33 Here, I am using (and relatively freely expanding on) Osterhammel's concise evaluation of nineteenth century anarchism, which encompasses several features: a tendency toward exile politics, conspirational action, and border-crossing. Osterhammel, "*The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*," 506.

34 Eric Hobsbawm, "Working-class internationalism," in *Internationalism in the Labour Movement, 1830-1940*, ed. Frits van Holthoon and Marcel van der Linden (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 9.

The Age of Wandering Agitators

As Hobsbawm underlines, highly mobile journeymen were quite adept at spreading revolutionary ideas: "Socialist, communist and anarchist movements were full of leaders and militants who transferred readily from one movement to another. More than this: they contained persons who might actually be simultaneously leaders of labour movements in more than one country."[35] With this in mind, it is hardly surprising that cities like Zagreb, Osijek, Pula, or Rijeka were visited rather often by wandering agitators of various backgrounds. In this regard, trends coming from Vienna and Budapest played an important role for Croatia-Slavonia. For example, Henrik Wieneke, an "infamous agitator" from the Hungarian capital, apparently visited Slavonia and Baranya in 1894 on several occasions. That year, Antun Rotter, the mayor of Osijek at the time, sent a report to the government in Zagreb, informing them that Wieneke, a 25-year-old glovemaker, was an anarchist who had come to town to propagate the aims of socialism. Wieneke had indeed managed in January to give a socialist speech to some poor winegrowers in Baranya before he tried to visit Osijek once again a few months later to participate in the May Day celebration. Rotter described him as a "dangerous man" who had been forced to leave Osijek on the grounds of not having valid travel documents.[36]

In the same 1894 report, Rotter complained about several other migratory agitators, including Karl (Dragutin) Spehn and Stjepan Lapuch. Lapuch had been exiled from Bosnia and Herzegovina because of his involvement in subversive activities, and Spehn, a Viennese typographer, had been accused of organizing socialist propaganda "[according to] the metropolitan model" because he kept in touch with contacts in Zagreb, Budapest, Brno, Switzerland, etc. According to Rotter, Spehn was familiar with contemporary covert communication techniques used by Italian and French activists. Finally, he was seen by the authorities as the "soul of the whole movement" and even more dangerous because he was "an educated man." Allegedly, Spehn had toured the surrounding Slavonian municipalities, trying to attract more people to the socialist cause, or at least get some financial support for the struggle.[37] All of this resulted in his permanent expulsion from Osijek.[38]

---

35 Hobsbawm, "Working-class internationalism," 9.

36 Mažuran, *Građa o radničkom pokretu*, 406-7.

37 Mažuran, *Građa o radničkom pokretu*, 407. Sphen was also mentioned a year later, on August 13, 1895, in the report on socialist activities written by the City government of Osijek. In the report, he is described as an agitator currently employed in Budapest. Spehn allegedly printed brochures in relatively large editions (c. 4,000 copies) and claimed that he would "attack the local areas". For these reasons, Hungarian policemen were asked to be vigilant and to seize the mentioned leaflets due to "dangerous agitation". Historian Oštrić classified Spehn in the category of workers from other countries with some experience in labor movement activities, who also tried to encourage the movement's development in Croatia-Slavonia through their engagement. State Archives in Osijek, City government of Osijek (HR-DAOS-10), box no. 5753a, „Izvješće grad. poglavarstva u Osieku o socialno-demokratskom pokretu." transcript of the document from August 13, 1895. Oštrić, "Radnički pokret," 22.

38 HR-DAOS-10, box no. 5753a, "Gradsko poglavarstvo Osiek podnaša žalbu Dragutin Spehn na odluku o izgonu iz grada Osieka." transcript of the document from July 10, 1895.

Nevertheless, Spehn was just one of the numerous revolutionaries who mingled with the growing Croatian proletariat. One of these was Vasilije "Vasa" Pelagić, a Bosnian Serb writer and a proponent of utopian socialism. He was known as "the people's teacher," and was one of the most influential agitators in Croatia-Slavonia between the 1870s and 1890s. He participated in the anti-Turkish uprising that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1875–78) as a leader of the group of socialists from the Military Frontier that was active along the Croatian-Bosnian border. On one occasion, newspapers reported that Pelagić had been caught with a group of "insurrectionary troop of hundred lads" while attempting to cross the Una River and enter Bosnia.[39] He was arrested in Petrovaradin several years later on April 7, 1880, and was supposed to be transferred to Petrinja to face trial. Pelagić, however, somehow managed to escape during the train ride there, prompting the Croatian government to issue a warrant for his arrest.[40] In this document, which remained in effect until his death in 1899, Pelagić was described as a man wanted for the crimes of high treason and disturbance of public peace. It was assumed that he was somewhere in Slavonia in the villages near Osijek or Đakovo or in Syrmia "where he has many followers."[41] Despite being almost constantly on the run, Pelagić managed to have an impact on the Croatian labor movement and its leaders (e.g., Vitomir Korać, one of the leading figures of the Social Democratic Party of Croatia-Slavonia), usually through his widely read pamphlets such as *What Is Socialism? What Do Socialists Want?* (1894). Right before the outbreak of the First World War, some journalists even proposed that during his lifetime, he had been "the leader of socialists in Croatia-Slavonia."[42]

Meanwhile, Istrian and Dalmatian cities were open to left-wing views primarily from the neighboring Kingdom of Italy. Just as in eastern Slavonia or northwestern Croatia, news of arrests of subversive individuals was not uncommon. For instance, sometime around 1898, authorities noticed that an Italian anarchist named Attilio Pieroni was in Split, and in 1900, the French socialist Joseph Signac was expelled from Rijeka after he had spent four months in prison.[43] In 1903, Andrija Mihoić, a house-painter, was arrested in Pula for distributing "improper" socialist materials."[44] And sometime around 1907, several workers from Istria and Dalmatia were connected to the Italian Germinal group from Trieste and accused of spreading militant anarchist propaganda.[45] Because of this, in 1907 and 1908, Split's law enforcement

---

39 "Vaso Pelagić," *Primorac*, Kraljevica, June 29, 1876.

40 Vlado Oštrić, "O odnosima između Vase Pelagića i radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj," *Prilozi* 5 (1969): 300.

41 State Archives in Osijek, collection of labor movement documents (HR-DAOS-2103), box no. 4, "Tjeralica," document no. 2368/1897.

42 "Zagreb 7. Ožujka," *Obzor*, Zagreb, March 8, 1914.

43 Max Nettlau, *Povijest anarhizma* (Zagreb: DAF, 2000), 342.

44 Pejić, *Historija klasičnog anarhizma u Hrvatskoj*, 111. Taken from: Ivan Pederin, "Socijaldemokrati i anarhisti u Istri i Trstu do početka XX. stoljeća – prema spisima c. k. policije u Državnome arhivu u Trstu," *Rijeka* 9, no. 2 (2004): 125-146.

45 Pejić, *Historija klasičnog anarhizma u Hrvatskoj*, 104-5.

agents conducted several investigations and searches and made arrests to gather sufficient information on local anarchists.[46]

At the very beginning of the twentieth century, newspapers like *Naša sloga* from Pula published dramatic reports of these occurrences. For example, on June 25, 1901, *Naša sloga* published an article stating, "Only God knows how many anarchists there are among the thousands of Italian laborers working on our coast!"[47] The shocking assassination of the Italian king Umberto I in July 1900, by a radicalized weaver named Gaetano Bresci (who had been introduced to the notorious "propaganda of the deed" in the United States), undoubtedly still lingered in public memory, instilling a fear of anarchists. So, when the city authorities in Padua reportedly sent a memo about anarchists in March 1902 to the governor of Rijeka, the press wrote that these men were in Istria "with the obvious intention of spreading fear and trepidation."[48]

Just a few weeks later, the governor banned *Radnički savez*, the largest labor organization in Rijeka, which had been founded in 1889 and had managed to attract a certain number of anarchists. Indeed, anarchist leanings among labor activists in Rijeka had a solid foundation in the city at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Ljubinka Karpocwicz, the proximity between Rijeka and Trieste, similar economies, and knowledge of Italian (which was also used in official communication), made connections between Italian socialists in Trieste and Rijeka's anarcho-syndicalists "natural and efficient."[49]

Press interest in Italian anarchists, mentioned occasionally in various contexts, did not wane in the following years. In 1903, *Naša sloga* wrote: "And so Italy blesses us with its workers who overwhelm our coastal cities, [with] counterfeiters, anarchists, freemasons, etc. Our blessed ally truly gladdens us!"[50] Public discourse such as this tried to portray the migrating workforce as a social factor that was not to be trusted. However, as Davide Turcato emphasizes, it is true that an incredibly active Italian anarchist movement certainly exhibited transnational traits at that time. He states that Italian anarchism was characterized by a high level of mobility across the Atlantic and around the Mediterranean.

46 Ennio Maseratti, "Anarhizam u Dalmaciji i Istri," Anarhistička biblioteka, accessed March 14, 2021, https://anarhisticka-biblioteka.net/library/ennio-maseratti-anarhizam-u-dalmaciji-i-istri.

47 "Uhvaćen anarhist," *Naša sloga*, Pula, June 25, 1901.

48 "Strah od anarhista!", *Naša sloga*, Pula, March 25, 1902.

49 Vitomir Korać noted that there were also "Croatian and Hungarian syndicates" active in Rijeka at the turn of the twentieth century, but he differentiated them from Italian-speaking labor organizations that leaned toward anarcho-syndicalism. However, in Korać's mind, anarcho-syndicalist tactics were well-spread in Rijeka due to the obvious influence of Italian language and culture in the area, and not because of permanent connections and collaboration between different socialist collectives. Ljubinka Karpowicz, Mihael Sobolevski, *Sindikalni pokret u općini Rijeka do 1941. godine* (Rijeka: Općinsko vijeće Saveza sindikata Hrvatske – Rijeka, 1990), 37, 40.

50 "Talijanski podanici – krivotvoritelji novca," *Naša sloga*, Pula, August 27, 1903.

Furthermore, between 1889 and 1913, nearly 40 percent of all Italian anarchist periodicals were published outside Italy.[51] Even after the First World War, connections among Italian socialists remained quite strong; Istrian workers read Italian socialist newspapers like *Umanità Nova*, whose contributors included, among others, the well-known anarchists Errico Malatesta, Camillo Berneri.[52]

The importance of newspapers for the early labor movement can hardly be overstated. Illegal distribution of politically radical content brought current socialist trends closer to local workers. Furthermore, the circulation of these materials hint at connections between activists from different areas. For instance, it can be rightfully assumed that in the early 1880s, some workers from Osijek were in contact with Leó Frankel, a communist revolutionary who had participated in the Paris Commune and collaborated with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Frankel was the most prominent representative of the radical wing of the Hungarian labor movement and was an editor of the Budapest weekly *Arbeiter Wochen-Chronik*, which also found its way to Osijek.[53] At the time, the paper was infamous for advocating internationalism and class struggle. In fact, on November 28, 1880, it published an article referring to Osijek, claiming it would become a great city "when workers' battalions from all over the world gather at a meeting in Osijek and declare an international and intercontinental commune."[54] Several years later, the emergence of some anarchist materials, once again from Hungary, raised concerns about subversive activities in Osijek. Ignjat Graff, a 26-year-old assistant locksmith, attempted to smuggle thirteen issues of the newspaper *Der Radikal*, one copy of the weekly *Arbeiter*, four copies of the famous Johann Most's newspaper *Freiheit*, three socialist pamphlets, and other publications.[55] Authorities described Graff as a "well-known anarchist" who was trying to persuade local men to join the "social-revolutionary workers' party." Eventually, he was banished from Osijek but was still kept under surveillance.[56]

Papers edited and published by workers in Croatia also reflected this rather dynamic transfer of ideas that was kept alive among nineteenth

---

51 Davide Turcato, "Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885 – 1915," *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 3 (2007): 435, 441. For more on Italian anarchist migrants, see Kenyon Zimmer, *Immigrants against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

52 It is estimated that *Umanità Nova* had approximately 400 subscribers in Pula around 1920. Tone Crnobori, *Borbena Pula – Prilog građi za povijest radničkog pokreta i NOB do rujna 1943* (Rijeka: Centar za historiju radničkog pokreta i NOB Istre, Hrvatskog primorja i Gorskog kotara, 1972), 125.

53 According to sources, *Arbeiter Wochen-Chronik* was also read by workers from Brod na Savi. Authorities described these people as members of a "social democratic organization" who were in contact with comrades in the Hungarian capital. Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol 1, 23-8, 30-1.

54 Mažuran, *Građa o radničkom pokretu*, 204.

55 For a more thorough analysis of anarchist materials confiscated by the police in Osijek in 1885, see: Luka Pejić, and Luka Zorica, "Arhivska i novinska građa o počecima radničkog pokreta te anarhizmu dostupna u Državnom arhivu u Osijeku: poseban osvrt na list *Freiheit* (1882. – 1885.)," *Osječki zbornik* 35 (2019): 63-78.

56 HR-DAOS-2103, box no. 1. Also, in: Luka Pejić, "Kriminal i represivni sustav u Osijeku u okvirima modernizacijskih procesa (1868. - 1918.)" (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2019), 261.

century socialists. *Radnički prijatelj*, started in 1874 by Dragutin Kale, a typographer from Zagreb, and his associates, was the first publication of this kind. Unlike other newspapers published in Croatia in the 1870s, *Radnički prijatelj* focused exclusively on the social, economic, and political problems of the working class. It contained articles in both Croatian and German, and its structure and content resembled *Vorwärts!* and *Der Arbeiterfreund*, two newspapers published in Vienna and Berlin in the late 1860s. *Radnički prijatelj* accepted and advocated certain ideas from Ferdinand Lassalle and the German socialists, namely their Eisenach Program (1869).[57] Although the paper was mainly targeted toward readers in Croatia, its articles were shot through with internationalist solidarity. In its very first issue, *Radnički prijatelj* wrote about freedom of the press and censorship in Prague, among other things, and mentioned the difficulties of "our brothers," meaning laborers from Graz. It also reported on "the sad state of English workers" who were living in terrible conditions or starving to death due to unemployment.[58] Interestingly, the paper had subscribers all over Europe in London, Vienna, Brno, Prague, Silesia, and elsewhere.[59]

The interconnectedness of different labor movements was also reinforced through migrations of Croatian workers who became involved in socialist activities abroad. Workers' associations for culture and mutual assistance served as meeting points for labor migrants from the Balkans. As Cvetka Knapič-Krhen writes, in the 1890s, organizations like these were founded in Vienna, Graz, Innsbruck, Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Budapest, London, and other cities. She states that some of the individuals who would later become leaders of social democracy in Southeast Europe (Ivan Ancel, Nikola Veličković, Dimitrije Tucović) gained their first experiences with organizing as members of these associations.[60] Workers' organizations abroad sometimes sent financial aid to their comrades in Croatia, who were facing harsh repressive measures against socialists. In early 1904, activists from Pittsburgh collected the equivalent of 249 crowns, which they sent to Zagreb to help publish socialist papers in Croatia-Slavonia. In addition to the donation, they enclosed the following message: "We wish you success in your difficult struggle, and we send our warmest wishes for solidarity at work. We will come to your aid at any time… Furthermore, we inform you that

57 Valentina Kezić, "Uloga tiska u radničkom pokretu Hrvatske i Slavonije: primjer Radničkoga prijatelja (1874. - 1875.)" (MA thesis, University of Osijek, 2020), 80. The Eisenach Program was the main manifesto of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. Eisenacher Marxism was closer to democratic socialism than the communist parties of later decades. As Albert S. Lindemann puts it, the party primarily supported trade unionism as the utility by which workers could prosper within capitalism. Albert S. Lindemann, *A History of European Socialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 104.

58 "Pregled." *Radnički prijatelj*, Zagreb, October 4, 1874.

59 Cvetka Knapič-Krhen, "Veze hrvatskih socijalista s hrvatskim radničkim pokretom i pokretanje prvog radničkog lista u Hrvatskoj," *Putovi revolucije* 5 (1965): 215.

60 See: Cvetka Knapič-Krhen, "Jugoslavenska radnička društva u Beču i Grazu i pokušaj osnivanja Saveza jugoslavenskih radničkih društava na prijelazu stoljeća (1888–1914)," *Povijesni prilozi* 7 (1988): 1-30.

we will start to agitate here to expand the distribution of our newspapers in American cities where there are Croats."[61]

Labor migrants from Croatia and other South Slavic countries edited and published newspapers abroad, such as *Radnička straža* (Chicago, 1907–1918) and *Radnička borba* (New York, Cleveland, Detroit 1907–1970). Even abroad, ideological divisions among activists sometimes emerged. For example, *Radnička borba* was very upfront about its socialist agenda. Its articles criticized capitalism, openly praised Marxism, supported ongoing strikes, and condemned the ruling class in general.

On the other hand, according to some, *Radnička straža* was the less radical and less sectarian of these two.[62] It published articles on the position of Croatian workers in the United States, which have provided outstanding accounts of the lives and aspirations of migrants from the Balkans. At the beginning of January 1908, *Radnička straža* reported that "terrible negligence and apathy reigned" among Croatians in Chicago, [63] a city of large slaughterhouses and steel mills and one of the significant centers of Croatian workers in the United States.[64] On December 8, 1907, one of the first workers' assemblies was held in the city, which was attended by approximately 80–100 Croatian workers who gathered to discuss "issues of vital importance" such as the education and the possibilities for political struggle and education. The newspaper emphasized that other Yugoslavs—primarily Serbs, Slovenes, and Bulgarians—would be admitted to all upcoming assemblies of this kind with "equal workers' love."[65] Soon after, in 1910, *Radnička straža* became the official paper of the Chicago-based Yugoslav Socialist League, which affirmed it as an important tool in the South Slavic labor movement's ventures abroad.[66] Essentially, as Jon Bekken puts it, "the workers' press was central to movement efforts to carry out radical education and to create and sustain a specifically working-class culture."[67]

Men from Croatia-Slavonia, such as the anarchists Stjepan Fabijanović and Ivan Zepp, spent decades abroad taking part in movements in other countries. Fabijanović, a baker from Slavonia, emigrated to the

---

61 Ivan Čizmić, "Jugoslavenski socijalisti u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama u prvom razdoblju svoga djelovanja (1894–1910)," *Migracijske i etničke teme* 4, no. 1-2 (1988): 81.

62 "Radnička Borba = Workers' Struggle ([New York, N.Y.]) 1907-1970," Library of Congress, accessed August 30, 2021: https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83035526/.

63 "Naše kretanje," *Radnička straža*, Chicago, January 8, 1908.

64 Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Odnos KPJ prema jugoslavenskoj radničkoj emigraciji u međuratnom razdoblju." *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 16, no. 2 (1984): 68.

65 "Naše kretanje."

66 Hranilović also writes about *Radnička straža*, the first socialist paper of Croatian emigrants in the United States: "Although *Radnička straža* did not take an appropriate stand vis-à-vis the working class' methods of destroying the capitalist social order, pleading, in the first place, for 'a cultural battle, organization, and the book' as the fundamental means of the class struggle, its contribution to the development of the workers and socialists' movement among Yugoslav emigration, to the American labor movement and the entire world labor movement is substantial". Nada Hranilović, "Radnička straža kao izvor za izučavanje položaja naših iseljenika u radničkome i socijalističkom pokretu SAD (1907-1918)," *Migracijske i etničke teme* 4, no. 1-2 (1988): 92, 102.

67 Jon Bekken, "'No Weapon so Powerful': Working-Class Newspapers in the United States," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (1988): 104.

United States in 1897 and hoboed across the continent, seeking answers to questions about the "individual and the state, mass and man."[68] When he was in North America, Fabijanović befriended numerous famous anarchists, such as Emma Goldman, Max Nettlau, and Rudolf Rocker. Despite his meager education, he published a collection of essays (*The Idle and Untimeous Observer*, 1917) and a book on philosophy (*As I See Nietzsche*, 1920). Fabijanović saw the world as "well-organized tyranny" that had to be fought against.[69]

Zepp, on the other hand, was a tailor from Osijek who left the city after an unsuccessful general strike in 1905 and spent some time in Hungary, Austria, Germany, and France. After his arrival in Switzerland, Zepp became active in unions in Zürich. He also managed to establish contact with Pierre Ramus,[70] a renowned Austrian anarchist and pacifist. A devout propagandist, Zepp constantly crisscrossed borders, doing his best to smuggle forbidden socialist papers to wherever he could. His private collection of subversive publications, now partially available at the State Archives in Osijek, contains socialist newspapers from the early 1900s (*Die Forderung*, *Le Voix du Peuple*, *Revolutionär*, etc.) along with some classic works of anarchism by Kropotkin, Landauer, Most, Nettlau, and others.[71]

When individuals like Fabijanović or Zepp decided to come back to Croatia, their return caused unease among the governing structures, who immediately demanded they be closely monitored. Concerned by these individuals, Archbishop Juraj Posilović (1894–1914) requested a report on socialist activity in the Varaždin area. He was officially notified that "several residents had been disseminating socialist ideology in northern Croatia for years." The report described their political views as "lewd" and "disastrous," and remarked that they had "absorbed" these ideas while working abroad.[72]

Repression of "Obscene Ideas"

The course of events in the second half of the nineteenth century was largely determined by specific policies of Croatia's government that aimed to modernize the country and stabilize the political system that had been defined by the 1868 Croatian-Hungarian Settlement. Likewise, these complex modernizing processes encompassed a repressive system that produced a reformed and solidly organized police force and a network of state penitentiaries. A modern and rising industrial society seemed to require new methods of surveillance and the repression of deviant

68 Well-preserved archival documents regarding Fabijanović's life and work can be found at the University of Michigan, i.e., Special Collections Research Center: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/sclead/umich-scl-ams0021?byte=18819303;focusrgn=bioghist;subview=standard;view=reslist.

69 Pejić, *Historija klasičnog anarhizma u Hrvatskoj*, 151-57.

70 This was a pseudonym used by Rudolf Grossmann (1882-1942).

71 Pejić, *Historija klasičnog anarhizma u Hrvatskoj*, 83-84. Also: State Archives in Osijek, personal collection of Ivan Zepp (HR-DAOS-1333), "Opis života u svrhu mirovine," July 2, 1958.

72 Čizmić does not explicitly state the year of Posilović's request and the origin of the quoted report. However, taking into account the information provided in footnote no. 14, related to this document (Archives of the Archdiocese of Zagreb – *Officium dioceseanum*, no. 4077-1901), it could be assumed that this took place in 1901. Čizmić, "Jugoslavenski socijalisti u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama u prvom razdoblju svoga djelovanja (1894–1910)," 84, 86.

and criminal behaviors.[73] Since socialist activists questioned the very foundations of civil society in the late nineteenth century, phenomena like the labor movement were seen to be of primary concern and needed to be closely and constantly monitored. In these cases, vertical communication tended to be quick and effective because all public authorities—from local police chiefs, mayors, and prefects to government officials and even the Ban himself (depending on who would be the first to receive certain information)—participated in sharing information about prohibited public assemblies, the distribution of radical newspapers, and infamous agitators arriving in Croatian cities.[74]

By relentlessly demanding shorter working hours, higher wages, the right to organize, improved labor and social legislation, universal suffrage, and the right to celebrate May Day, the developing labor movement was also, to a certain extent, undermining the dominant political and economic order.[75] For this reason, socialists were prosecuted for crimes of rebellion, disturbing the peace, treason, or various forms of public violence. According to nineteenth-century Croatian criminal law, rebellion was defined as a situation in which force was necessary "to restore peace and order," and the "rebels and ringleaders" could be sentenced to ten to twenty years in prison. If their act was considered to be very "sinister and dangerous," they could be sentenced to life imprisonment.[76] Also, as early as 1854, measures were envisaged for individuals who distributed "rebellious propaganda." They were accused of being accomplices to the crime of high treason, which carried a sentence of five to ten years in prison if found guilty. Anyone who expressed remorse by betraying their comrades would be completely exonerated.[77] In addition to that, individuals who insulted the monarch or the Royal House of Habsburg were subject to arrest and five years' imprisonment.[78] Naturally, socialists and their collectives kept their activities secret for the most of the late nineteenth century, and employed covert strategies to evade being detected and punished by the authorities.[79]

---

73 See: Pejić, "Kriminal i represivni sustav u Osijeku u okvirima modernizacijskih procesa."

74 Pejić, "Kriminal i represivni sustav u Osijeku u okvirima modernizacijskih procesa," 254.

75 In her book, Ilham Khuri-Makdisi illuminates the link between the emergence and construction of new social configurations, categories, and classes and the rise of political radicalism in the late nineteenth century Eastern Mediterranean. According to her, the latter included "specific calls for social justice, workers' rights, mass secular education, and anticlericalism, and more broadly a general challenge to the existing social and political order at home and abroad". See Ilham Khuri-Makdisi, *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914* (Berkely: University of California Press, 2010), 1, 6.

76 Josip Šilović, ed., *Kazneni zakon o zločinstvih, prestupcih i prekršajih od 27. svibnja 1852. sa Zakoni od 17. svibnja 1875. o porabi tiska…sa zakonimi i naredbami koji se na nje odnose ter sa rješidbami kr. stola sedmorice i vrhovnog suda u Beču* (Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1908), 85-6.

77 Šilović, *Kazneni zakon*, 77.

78 Šilović, *Kazneni zakon*, 79.

79 Nonetheless, an important change occurred in 1907 in the Austrian part of the Monarchy. Thanks to the relentless engagement of socialists, all adult male citizens in Austria were given the right to vote. Soon after, social democrats became the party with the most representatives in the parliament (87 of 516), winning the election with 23% or more than one million votes. In other words, social democrats became the single strongest parliamentary party in Austria almost overnight. Judson, *Povijest Habsburškog Carstva*, 412.

Ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry's administration (1883–1903) was marked by almost frantic searches in Croatia-Slavonia for anarchists, whose international connections had become apparent during the 1880s. As Ana Rajković detected in one of the contemporary official documents, his government did everything it could to repress "obscene" ideas such as anarchism. "The entire labor movement was labeled an *abnormal*, *perilous*, and *obscene idea* that aims to incite among the population hatred and contempt for the government," Rajković explains.[80]

Anarchist hysteria reached its peak in Austria-Hungary in late 1883 and early 1884 when Franz Hlubek, a Viennese police officer, was murdered by a worker named Anton Kammerer. A Viennese banker named H. M. Eisert, was also killed around the same time, and it was alleged that Austrian and Hungarian anarchists were involved in his assassination.[81] Meanwhile, small-scale anarchist activities were taking place in the Croatian capital. Workers from Styria and Moravia, namely a 45-year-old carpenter Franjo Srnec and a 59-year-old tailor Wolfgang Hiža, distributed leaflets in Zagreb urging fellow citizens to start the revolution. Srnec and Hiža had even organized a socialist circle for workers where they read and disseminated subversive literature. When their anarchist activism became evident, they were arrested and taken to court in 1884 for the crime of high treason and for insulting the monarch and members of the Royal House. Even though alleged connections between them and the Viennese anarchist Anton Kammerer were never proven, the government nevertheless stated that Srnec and Hiža "stood in a lively alliance with the notorious anarchist agitators," i.e., revolutionary socialists from other countries.[82]

In early March 1884, Ban Khuen-Héderváry sent a circular referring to their arrest, in which he wrote about a "secret society of workers" in Zagreb consisting of members from Vienna, Budapest, and Switzerland. He added that they were in correspondence with "notorious anarchists" from abroad.[83] It did not take long for local newspapers to pick up the story. Papers like *Pozor* described anarchism as a "freak" of socialism that had found itself before a Croatian court for the first time. The press tried to comfort its readers by stating that "none of the disseminators of anarchist ideas is a son of our homeland nor have their endeavors succeeded among the local workers, much less among the peasants."[84] Interestingly, the primary court hearing held in mid-May 1884 was conducted in German because the accused anarchists did not speak Croatian.[85] The prosecution claimed the brochures they had been distributing argued that Croats had shed too much blood for "the Habsburg tyrants," and called on workers to join the socialists "and to fight alongside the proletariat of all countries for equal rights and responsibilities

80 Ana Rajković, *Širenje bludnih ideja u Slavoniji. Pojava anarhističkih ideja u radničkom pokretu Slavonije* (Zagreb: Što čitaš?, 2016), 52.
81 Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol 1, 32-4.
82 Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol 1, 35-7.
83 Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol 1, 37.
84 Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol 1, 47-8.
85 Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol 1, 51.

for all citizens."[86] Anarchists from Zagreb received and read a wide range of publications, including German pamphlets and newspapers published in Budapest and Zürich and even Johan Most's *Freiheit* from New York. The mainstream press described some of these materials as containing "frantic and depraved" proclamations aimed at "resurrecting anarchist disorder."[87] In the end, Srnec was sentenced to five years in prison and Hiža to six.[88] After serving their sentences in Lepoglava, they were expelled from the country.[89]

Khuen-Héderváry used episodes such as these to tighten his grip on the local labor movement as he intensified the repression of activists by pursuing prosecutions and banning union activities. Despite this, another wave of fear related to potential anarchist threats rose up in the late 1890s, especially after the 1898 assassination in Geneva of Empress Elisabeth of Austria by the Italian anarchist Luigi Lucheni. The murder of Franz Joseph's wife inspired some to share their insights about destitute Italian workers. For example, *Naša sloga* published an article stating that Italy "neglects the upbringing of its sons" and that these "unfortunates, hungry and ignorant, travel around the world, gladly and quickly joining up with the worst scum of human society."[90] Two days later, another newspaper reported that riots against Italian workers had broken out in major cities in the monarchy after Lucheni's act.[91]

For years around the turn of the last century, Khuen-Héderváry's government was very active in issuing an almost endless stream of warrants for foreign migrating anarchists whom the authorities believed could be crossing Croatian borders. Documents such as one from mid-December 1900, titled "Italian anarchists of unknown residence," were not unusual in official correspondence between the Ban's office and city authorities. For instance, a list from December 14, 1900, contained the names of forty-seven Italian men with brief information about their birthplace, age, languages they spoke, vocation, and physical characteristics. Some of them, like Demetrio Francini, a 69-year-old tailor from Rocca San Casciano, were described as "dangerous anarchists." For others, such as Castro Ferdinando, there were even remarks about their alleged plans "to kill His Majesty."[92] In some cases, the depictions of wanted anarchists were quite unusual. For example, the Swiss Fridrik Mauley was described in late 1902 as a person with "a round, pale, yellowish face" and "mean teeth."[93] In any case, after forwarding new lists of suspicious individuals to lower instances, the government demanded "comprehensive searches" and reports on their success. Given that no information has been preserved on new trials against anarchists or large-scale deportations from Croatia at the beginning of the twentieth century, it can be assumed they did not remain in the area for long or in large numbers.

---

86 Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol 1, 43.
87 "Glavna rasprava proti anarhistom u Zagrebu," *Narodne novine*, Zagreb, May 16, 1884.
88 "Anarhisti u Zagrebu," *Narodne novine*, Zagreb, May 17, 1884.
89 Pejić, *Historija klasičnog anarhizma u Hrvatskoj*, 94. Taken from: Cazi, *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj*, vol. 1, 53.
90 "Ubojstva talijanskih anarhista," *Naša sloga*, Trst, September 15, 1898.
91 "Kraljica Jelisava," *Banovac*, Petrinja, September 17, 1898.
92 HR-DAOS-2103, box no. 4, "Talijanske anarhiste nepoznatog boravišta." December 14, 1900.
93 HR-DAOS-2103, box no. 4, "Fridrik Mauley." December 2, 1902.

Conclusion

It is quite clear that the industrial development of present-day Croatian territories in the second half of the nineteenth century required a skilled workforce. Preserved sources tell us that the migratory processes that occurred as a result of this sometimes provoked xenophobic and distrustful reactions from local workers who were afraid they would lose their jobs to foreign competition. As a transit area between Central and Eastern Europe, Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Istria attracted thousands of migrant workers from neighboring regions and countries who came in search of a better livelihood. Thus, local laborers in several urban areas encountered contemporary socialist thinking shaped by communist, anarchist, or social-democratic perspectives. Even though theoretical production in Croatian was scant throughout the century (except for the outstanding contribution of the short-lived *Radnički prijatelj*), local labor organizations still gradually developed because their leaders were familiar with the content published by the subversive press in Budapest, Vienna, Berlin, Zürich, and even New York. Such publications were delivered through illegal channels that included an underground network of socialist activists and all kinds of traveling agitators.

The early labor movement was imbued with various ideological influences, but from the 1890s to the First World War, it was largely influenced by a social democratic approach modeled on those in Austria and Hungary.[94] Also, sources confirm the existence of migratory processes in both directions. In other words, workers from Italy, for example, propagated anarchism in Istria, and so did Croatians such as Ivan Zepp in Switzerland and Stjepan Fabijanović in the United States. In addition, Slavic workers from the Balkans formed associations in Vienna, Budapest, and Chicago, taught methods of organizing to cadres who would lead movements in their homelands in the years following. In this atmosphere, the mainstream Croatian press repeated the claims that socialism was foreign to Croats, that it was not part of their nature, and that its "seed" in this area was being sown by suspicious foreigners. It is without question that certain theoretical and activist models from the outside largely shaped labor actions in Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Istria (after all, internationalist cooperation and transfer of ideas have always been at the very core of socialist activates); however, local movements undoubtedly later outgrew their passive reception of fashionable impulses from other areas. The ever-growing labor force's everyday hardships brought class animosities to a boiling point, which meant that between 1905 and 1905, there was no need for agitators to teach workers in Slavonian cities

94 This, of course, coincided with the pinnacle of social democracy as a movement on a more general, European level. According to Maria Todorova, some thirty parties were founded in Europe between 1871 and 1905, which variously described themselves as "social democratic," "socialist" or "labor". Maria Todorova, *The Lost World of Socialists at Europe's Margins: Imagining Utopia, 1870s–1920s* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 13.

like Osijek, Belišće, or Brod na Savi[95] how to undertake autonomous actions and develop their socialist platforms. As a result, the authorities carefully monitored a wide range of subversive activities, which included workers' assemblies, distribution of illegal newspapers, and strikes, to track down individuals and collectives who were demanding radical changes to the existing political and economic order. This was particularly evident during the time of Khuen-Héderváry, whose administration, motivated by events in Vienna, held the first trial of anarchists in Croatia-Slavonia in 1884.

In general, Yugoslav historiography has quite thoroughly analyzed actions undertaken by workers gathered in unions or left-wing political parties, but it has not given enough thought to the social history of the unorganized workforce or migrating radicals such as anarchists. By taking these actors into consideration, it is possible to reconstruct a more complex picture of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century labor history. Hopefully, future research will provide additional insights into these issues.

95 Several important strikes, organized by workers employed in the wood-based industry, happened in Slavonia between 1905 and 1907. Most notably, in May 1905 the first general strike in the Croatian history took place in Osijek. See Luka Pejić, "Godine revolta: Štrajkovi radnika slavonske drvnoprerađivačke industrije (1905.-1907.)," in *Slavonske šume kroz povijest*, ed. Dinko Župan and Robert Skenderović (Slavonski Brod: Podružnice za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje, 2017), 327-58.

Sources

Archival sources

1. State Archives in Osijek, City government of Osijek (HR-DAOS-10), box no. 5753a, "Gradsko poglavarstvo Osiek podnaša žalbu Dragutin Spehn na odluku o izgonu iz grada Osieka," transcript of the document from July 10, 1895.
2. State Archives in Osijek, City government of Osijek (HR-DAOS-10), box no. 5753a, „Izviešće grad. poglavarstva u Osieku o socialno-demokratskom pokretu," transcript of the document from August 13, 1895.
3. State Archives in Osijek, collection of labor movement documents (HR-DAOS-2103), box no. 4, "Fridrik Mauley," December 2, 1902.4.
4. State Archives in Osijek, collection of labor movement documents (HR-DAOS-2103), box no. 4, "Talijanske anarhiste nepoznatog boravišta," December 14, 1900.
5. State Archives in Osijek, collection of labor movement documents (HR-DAOS-2103), box no. 4, "Tjeralica," document no. 2368/1897.
6. State Archives in Osijek, personal collection of Ivan Zepp (HR-DAOS-1333), "Opis života u svrhu mirovine," July 2, 1958.

Newspapers

1. "Anarchisti u Zagrebu." *Narodne novine*. Zagreb, May 17, 1884.
2. "Glavna rasprava proti anarhistom u Zagrebu." *Narodne novine*. Zagreb, May 16, 1884.
3. "Kraljica Jelisava." *Banovac*. Petrinja, September 17, 1898.
4. "Naše kretanje." *Radnička straža*. Chicago, January 8, 1908.
5. "O štićenju domaćega obrta." *Narodne novine*. Zagreb, April 18, 1883.
6. "Pobunili se seljaci." *Virovitičan*. Virovitica, June 12, 1904.
7. "Poslije štrajka." *Narodna obrana*. Osijek, May 18, 1905.
8. "Pregled." *Radnički prijatelj*. Zagreb, October 4, 1874.
9. "Strah od anarhista!" *Naša sloga*. Pula, March 25, 1902.
10. "Talijanski podanici – krivotvoritelji novca." *Naša sloga*. Pula, August 27, 1903.
11. "Tučnjava i izgredi," *Narodna obrana*, Osijek, June 7, 1906.
12. "Tvornice u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji." *Narodne novine*. Zagreb, April 4, 1888.
13. "Ubojstva talijanskih anarhista." *Naša sloga*. Trst, September 15, 1898.
14. "Uhvaćen anarchist." *Naša sloga*. Pula, June 25, 1901.
15. "Vaso Pelagić." *Primorac*. Kraljevica, June 29, 1876.
16. "Zagreb 7. ožujka." *Obzor*. Zagreb, March 8, 1914.

Bibliography

1. Bekken, Jon. "'No Weapon so Powerful': Working-Class Newspapers in the United States." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (1988): 104-19.
2. Budicin, Marino et al, eds. *Naši španjolski dobrovoljci,* Historica Nova, vol. III. Rijeka: Centar za historiju radničkog pokreta i NOR Istre, Hrvatskog primorja i Gorskog kotara, 1988.
3. Cattaruzza, Marina. *Socialismo adriatico: la socialdemocrazia di lingua italiana nei territori costieri della Monarchia asburgica: 1888-1915*. Rome: Piero Lacaita Editore, 1998.
4. Cazi, Josip. *Počeci modernog radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj - od prvih radničkih društava do osnivanja Socialdemokratske stranke (1880. – 1895.)*, vol. 1. Zagreb: Savez sindikata Jugoslavije – Republičko vijeće za Hrvatsku, 1958.
5. Crnobori, Tone. *Borbena Pula – Prilog građi za povijest radničkog pokreta i NOB do rujna 1943*. Rijeka: Centar za historiju radničkog pokreta i NOB Istre, Hrvatskog primorja i Gorskog kotara, 1972.
6. Čizmić, Ivan. "Jugoslavenski socijalisti u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama u prvom razdoblju svoga djelovanja (1894–1910)." *Migracijske i etničke teme* 4, no. 1-2 (1988): 79-87.
7. Foretić, Foretić. "Pregled socijalističke štampe u Dalmaciji, Istri i Rijeci do 1919." *Radovi* 10, no. 4 (1972): 169-98.
8. Hobsbawm, Eric. "Working-class internationalism." In *Internationalism in the Labour Movement, 1830-1940*, edited by Frits van Holthoon and Marcel van der Linden, 3-16. Leiden: Brill, 1988.
9. Hobsbawm, Eric. *How to Change the World: Reflections on Marx and Marxism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
10. Hranilović, Nada. "Radnička straža kao izvor za izučavanje položaja naših iseljenika u radničkome i socijalističkom pokretu SAD (1907-1918)." *Migracijske i etničke teme* 4, no. 1-2 (1988): 89-102.
11. Johnston, William M. *The Austrian Mind. An Intellectual and Social History 1848* – 1938. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972.
12. Judson, Pieter. *Povijest Habsburškog Carstva*. Zagreb: Sandorf, 2018.
13. Karpowicz, Ljubinka and Mihael Sobolevski. *Sindikalni pokret u općini Rijeka do 1941. godine.* Rijeka: Općinsko vijeće Saveza sindikata Hrvatske – Rijeka, 1990.
14. Kezić, Valentina. "Uloga tiska u radničkom pokretu Hrvatske i Slavonije: primjer Radničkoga prijatelja (1874. - 1875.)." MA thesis, University of Osijek, 2020.
15. Khuri-Makdisi, Ilham. *The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860-1914*. Berkely: University of California Press, 2010.
16. Knapič-Krhen, Cvetka. "Veze hrvatskih socijalista s hrvatskim radničkim pokretom i pokretanje prvog radničkog lista u Hrvatskoj." *Putovi revolucije* 5 (1965): 213-18.
17. Kolak Bošnjak, Arijana. "Struktura hrvatskog društva u 19. stoljeću i razvoj građanskog društva." In *Temelji moderne Hrvatske. Hrvatske zemlje u „dugom" 19. stoljeću*, edited by Vlasta Švoger and Jasna Turkalj. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2016.

18. Kolar-Dimitrijević, Mira. "Odnos KPJ prema jugoslavenskoj radničkoj emigraciji u međuratnom razdoblju." *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 16 (1984), no. 2: 65-83.

19. Korać, Vitomir. *Povjest radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji* vol. 1. Zagreb: Radnička komora za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju, 1930.

20. Kovačević, Ivan. *Ekonomski položaj radničke klase u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji 1867. – 1914*. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Export-press, 1972.

21. Lindemann, Albert S. *A History of European Socialism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

22. Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. *The Communist Manifesto*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

23. Maseratti, Ennio. "Anarhizam u Dalmaciji i Istri." Anarhistička biblioteka. Accessed March 14, 2021. https://anarhisticka-biblioteka.net/library/ennio-maseratti-anarhizam-u-dalmaciji-i-istri.

24. Mažuran, Ive, ed. *Građa o radničkom pokretu Osijeka i Slavonije: 1867-1894*. Osijek: Historijski arhiv u Osijeku, 1967.

25. Nettlau, Max. *Povijest anarhizma*. Zagreb: DAF, 2000.

26. Osterhammel, Jürgen. *The Transformation of the World: A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*, translated by Patrick Camiller. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

27. Oštrić, Vlado. "O odnosima između Vase Pelagića i radničkog pokreta u Hrvatskoj." *Prilozi* 5 (1969): 293-314.

28. Oštrić, Vlado. "Radnički pokret u Hrvatskoj od 1867. do početka XX. stoljeća." Časopis *za suvremenu povijest* 13, no. 2 (1981): 5-25.

29. Pederin, Ivan. "Socijaldemokrati i anarhisti u Istri i Trstu do početka XX. stoljeća – prema spisima c. k. policije u Državnome arhivu u Trstu." *Rijeka* 9, no. 2 (2004): 125-46.

30. Pejić, Luka. *Historija klasičnog anarhizma u Hrvatskoj – fragmenti subverzije*. Zagreb: DAF, 2016.

31. Pejić, Luka. "Godine revolta: Štrajkovi radnika slavonske drvnoprerađivačke industrije (1905. - 1907.)." In *Slavonske šume kroz povijest*, edited by Dinko Župan and Robert Skenderović. Slavonski Brod: Podružnice za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje, 2017, 327-58.

32. Pejić, Luka. "Kriminal i represivni sustav u Osijeku u okvirima modernizacijskih procesa (1868. - 1918.)." PhD diss., University of Zagreb, 2019.

33. Pejić, Luka and Luka Zorica. "Arhivska i novinska građa o počecima radničkog pokreta te anarhizmu dostupna u Državnom arhivu u Osijeku: poseban osvrt na list *Freiheit* (1882. – 1885.)." *Osječki zbornik* 35 (2019): 63-78.

34. Petrungaro, Stefano. "Popular Protest Against Hungarian Symbols in Croatia (1883-1903). A Study in Visual History." *Cultural and Social History* 13, no. 4 (2016): 503-20.

35. Plećaš, Dušan. *Prvomajske proslave u Osijeku*. Osijek: Centar za kulturu i umjetnost Narodnog sveučilišta Božidar Maslarić, 1973.

36. "Radnička Borba = Workers' Struggle ([New York, N.Y.]) 1907-1970." Library of Congress. Accessed August 30, 2021. https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83035526/.

37. Rajković, Ana. "Utjecaj austrijske socijaldemokracije u kontekstu razvoja radničkog pokreta na području Slavonije na prijelazu 19. u 20. stoljeće." In *DG Jahrbuch. Godišnjak njemačke zajednice* 22, edited by Renata Trischler, 219–36. Osijek: Njemačka zajednica, 2015.
38. Rajković, Ana. *Širenje bludnih ideja u Slavoniji. Pojava anarhističkih ideja u radničkom pokretu Slavonije*. Zagreb: Što čitaš?, 2016.
39. Rajković, Ana. "Godina 1914. – napuštanje koncepta proleterskoga internacionalizma na primjeru ratne mobilizacije slavonskoga radništva." In *1914. Prva godina rata u Trojednoj Kraljevini i Austro-Ugarskoj Monarhiji*, edited by Vijoleta Herman Kaurić, 545-61. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 2018.
40. Sklevicky, Lydia. *Konji, žene, ratovi*. Zagreb: Druga, 1996.
41. Strčić, Petar, editor. *Radnički pokret i NOB općine Labin*. Rijeka: Skupština općine Labin. Centar za historiju radničkog pokreta i NOR-a Istre, Hrvatskog primorja i Gorskog kotara, 1980.
42. Šilović, Josip, ed. *Kazneni zakon o zločinstvih, prestupcih i prekršajih od 27. svibnja 1852. sa Zakoni od 17. svibnja 1875. o porabi tiska…sa zakonimi i naredbami koji se na nje odnose ter sa rješidbami kr. stola sedmorice i vrhovnog suda u Beču*. Zagreb: L. Hartman, 1908.
43. Tibor, Iván Berend and György Ránki. *Evropska periferija i industrijalizacija 1780.–1914*. Zagreb: Naklada Naprijed, 1996.
44. Todorova, Maria. *The Lost World of Socialists at Europe's Margins: Imagining Utopia, 1870s–1920s*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.
45. Turcato, Davide. "Italian Anarchism as a Transnational Movement, 1885–1915." *International Review of Social History* 52, no. 3 (2007): 407-44.
46. van der Linden, Marcel. *Workers of the World: Essays Toward a Global Labor History*, vol. 1. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
47. Zimmer, Kenyon. *Immigrants against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2015.