

Croatian Federation of Sweden in 1980s – a story of an improbable success

The paper describes some aspects of the activity of the largest organization of Croatian immigrants in Sweden – Federation of Croatian Cultural, Sports, and Religious Societies in Sweden, colloquially Croatian Federation (Savez hrvatskih kulturnih, športskih i vjerskih društava u Švedskoj or colloquially in Croatian Hrvatski savez – HS) until the 1991 creation of a sovereign Croatian state. More specifically, the paper analyses reasons behind the establishment of the HS and its conflicts with the Yugoslav-Swedish Federation, colloquially Yugoslav Federation (Jugoslovensko-švedska zajednica or colloquially in Croatian Jugoslavenski savez – JS), efforts to integrate Croatian immigrants into Swedish society and to present Croatian cultural tradition, the struggle for the right to use the Croatian literary language and for keeping Yugoslavia out of complementary schooling of Croatian children. Also, the paper describes methods used to defend members of HS from the repression of the Yugoslav communist regime and to inform Swedish public opinion about human rights violations in Croatia. The actions of HS are analyzed in the context of activities of the Croatian political emigration in the period 1945–1990 and its struggle for an independent and democratic Croatian state.

Key words: Croatian émigrés, labor migrants, Sweden, Croatian Federation, communist Yugoslavia, integration

Introduction

One of the processes that have shaped the history of the Croatian state and ethnic territory since the end of the 19th century is emigration. From about 1880 until today, on the territory of the present Republic of Croatia, as well as in some surrounding countries where Croats live, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were several large waves of emigration with numerous individual and group emigrations and escapes. The push factors were mainly the unfavorable economic situation and political persecution and marginalization, but also some others, such as adventurism. A significant part of

emigrants sought a safer and better quality life in overseas countries, while Western Europe became the new home for a part of political refugees and economic emigrants, especially in the post-World War II period, i.e. during the existence of communist Yugoslavia.

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) became a place of refuge for some of the émigrés after World War II, but also the destination of a much larger number of Croats who came as labor migrants for the so-called temporary work since the early 1960s.¹ Croats from these two categories – political refugees and labor migrants whose stay abroad increasingly lost its temporary character – also immigrated to Sweden, a country in northern Europe with a long tradition of parliamentarism and a dynamic economy that offered them what they did not have in their homeland – the opportunity to engage in unhindered political and social activity as well as employment, with the possibility to achieve faster social advancement. Although there are no studies on the exact number of Croats and their descendants in Sweden, it is estimated that there were about twenty thousand of them at the beginning of the 21st century.²

As in the rest of the Western world, Croatian political refugees in Sweden began to act politically in the 1950s to create an independent and democratic state characterized by a strong anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist tone. Moreover, in the 1960s, Croats in Sweden began to gather on a social level, while a new form of organization, this time in an atmosphere of limited liberalization in the homeland and based on the cultural institution of the homeland – Matica Hrvatska – emerged in 1970 with the establishment of the Society of Friends of Matica Hrvatska “Matija Gubec” (*Društvo prijatelja Matice hrvatske “Matija Gubec”*, abbreviated MG Society or in Croatian *Društvo “Matija Gubec”*, DMG). While liberal-national aspirations in Croatia were forcibly halted about two years later by the suppression of the movement popularly known as the Croatian Spring, the DMG continued its activities, which consisted of educating the Swedish public about oppression at home, representing its members and their interests independently of Yugoslavia before various Swedish institutions, and carrying out various actions and manifestations aimed at preserving the Croatian national identity of Croatian immigrants and their descendants. In an attempt to make these and similar efforts even more effective, the DMG has been in the lead in bringing together Croatian organizations and societies in Sweden that are democratically oriented and involved in the fields of culture and sports. These efforts took shape with the establishment of the Federation of Croatian Cultural, Sports and Religious Societies in

1 Ivan Čizmić, Marin Sopta, Vlado Šakić, *Iseljena Hrvatska*, Zagreb 2005.

On labor migrants, see books and articles by Ivo Baučić, such as: *Porijeklo i struktura radnika iz Jugoslavije u SR Njemačkoj*, Zagreb 1970; *Radnici u inozemstvu prema popisu stanovništva Jugoslavije 1971*, Zagreb 1973. From recent historiographical literature, see: Vladimir Ivanović, *Geburstag pišeš normalno. Jugoslovenski gastarbajteri u SR Njemačkoj i Austriji 1965-1973*, Beograd 2012. About the latest emigrant wave from Croatia, see: Tado Jurić, *Iseljavanje Hrvata u Njemačku: gubimo li Hrvatsku*, Zagreb 2018.

2 Čizmić et. al, *Iseljena Hrvatska*, 280.

Sweden (*Savez hrvatskih kulturnih, športskih i vjerskih društava u Švedskoj*, colloquially Croatian Federation or *Hrvatski savez*, HS) in 1978. The name of the organization in Swedish was *Kroatiska riksförbundet* (in Croatian *Savez hrvatskih društava*, in English Federation of Croatian Societies). The successor organization to the aforementioned organization still exists today and operates under the name Federation of Croatian Societies Sweden (*Kroatiska Riksförbundet Sverige*, in Croatian *Savez Hrvatskih Društava Švedska*), but this paper focuses on the period from the establishment of HS until the collapse of communist Yugoslavia, as this tectonic shift changed the position of HS in Sweden as well as its relations with the homeland.

The paper reconstructs the main forms of activity and action of HS, starting with the manner of its creation and the motivation for such an act. In addition, a significant part of the space is devoted to the contests with the Yugoslav-Swedish Federation (*Jugoslovensko-švedska zajednica*, colloquially Yugoslav Federation or *Jugoslavenski savez*, JS), a parastatal organization of the Yugoslav communist regime, but also the defense against various forms of repression by the Yugoslav communist regime, both during the stay of the members of HS in Yugoslavia and in Sweden. Indeed, some of the Croatian immigrants were also subjected to pressure and demonization by the Yugoslav regime in their new homeland, mainly through the activities of the Yugoslav embassy and consulates, but also by the Yugoslav intelligence services. Although nominally a non-political organization, HS advocated respect for human rights and national rights in Yugoslavia. One of the aspects of this type of activity was informing Swedish politicians and the public about the persecution of Croatian dissidents, such as Marko Veselica, or about the torture of Croatian political prisoners.

One of the goals of HS was the best possible integration of Croatian immigrants into Swedish society while preserving Croatian national identity. As for the latter, great attention was paid to the preservation and presentation of cultural traditions, especially in the form of annual events that gathered large numbers of participants and spectators and were called Croatian Culture Festivals. Although the 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (*Socijalistička Republika Hrvatska*, SRH) defined the Croatian literary language as an official language and it was therefore used for teaching in schools, the Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian language was used in complementary schooling for the children of labor migrants in Western Europe, including in Sweden. In addition, the so-called Eastern, Serbian variant was often imposed on Croatian children. HS on the other hand, successfully fought in a number of cases for its members, who taught Croatian children the Croatian literary language, to be selected as teachers of complementary schooling. HS advocated for the use of Croatian literary language in Sweden and in other areas as well, for example, in the communication of Swedish state institutions with Croatian immigrants. Also, HS played an important role in the publication of a separate Croatian-Swedish dictionary, not just a Serbo-Croatian-Swedish one, as originally planned.

Scientific literature on Croats in Sweden is almost non-existent, although the contribution from the book *Iseljena Hrvatska* was a good starting point for research. Therefore, this article is written mainly on the basis of various sources. First and foremost is the magazine *Hrvatski glasnik* (*Kroatisk invandrartidning*, Eng. *Croatian Herald*), published by HS, which appeared from 1979 to 1981 and then from 1986 until it was discontinued in the late 1990s. The magazines of the Croatian political emigration *Poruka slobodne Hrvatske* and *Nova Hrvatska* were also used. Sources of similar provenance are the testimonies of former prominent members of HS, obtained by the author through the use of oral history methods. He spoke personally with Branko Salaj, the most prominent Croatian émigré in Sweden and the *spiritus movens* of DMG and HS, and conducted electronic correspondence with prominent activists in Malmö – Ivo Biloglav and Mate Balić.

Likewise, documents of the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Croatia (*Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Hrvatske*, SSRNH), the Council for Foreign Relations of the Executive Council of the SRH Parliament (*Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom Izvršnog vijeća Sabora SRH*), and Republic Committee for Foreign Relations of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (*Republički komitet za odnose s inozemstvom Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske*). The magazine *Hrvatska riječ* was also used in the preparation of this work. The magazine was published from 1979 to 1985 by those Croats in Sweden who were loyal to Yugoslavia. In addition, the author has used a number of other archival sources, magazines, scientific and journalistic books and articles to contextualize certain events and processes. Through a comparative analysis of the aforementioned sources, the author attempted to reconstruct and critically evaluate the aforementioned characteristics of HS 's activities.

The paper gives only a partial insight into the activities of the HS and the political and social organization of the Croats in Sweden. Nevertheless, it can serve as general information on the mentioned topic and as a starting point for further research, for which there is certainly potential. When it comes to sources that are still waiting for scientific evaluation, the numerous personal files on Croatian émigrés in Sweden, which were created through the work of the Yugoslav intelligence services, should be highlighted. In addition, there are documents produced by Yugoslav diplomatic institutions in Sweden, as well as by those in Yugoslavia (in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade) responsible for the field of foreign policy. As far as Croatia is concerned, the documentation of the Council for Foreign Relations of the Executive Council of the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Croatia comes into consideration. When it comes to other sources produced by the work of the institutions of communist Yugoslavia, researchers who wish to conduct more systematic research on Croats in Sweden must definitely take into account the documents of the institutions responsible for education and culture, as well as those of the Croatian Heritage Foundation (*Hrvatska matica iseljenika*), *Hrvatski glasnik*, as well as *Hrvatska riječ*, the newsletter of the few Croats in Sweden who remained loyal to the Yugoslav regime, and interviews with some of the leading

figures of HS can be conditionally considered Swedish sources, since the mentioned magazines were published in Sweden and Salaj, Biloglav and Balić were active in that country. For a more comprehensive research of this topic, it is necessary to consult other sources in Sweden, especially documents of state institutions that corresponded with Croatian immigrants, some of which are also mentioned in this paper. In addition, the diplomatic institutions that communicated with Yugoslavia, as well as the Swedish police and intelligence services that tried to monitor some of the Croatian immigrants, but also to be informed about the activities of the Yugoslav intelligence services. It is also worth mentioning a number of Swedish newspapers and magazines that wrote about Croatian immigrants, which is also evident in this paper. Also, sometimes prominent members of HS wrote about topics of interest in Swedish newspapers and magazines. An important insight into the activities of HS is also provided by the archive of this organization, which is currently in private hands, and it remains questionable whether the archive of JS has been preserved. The author hopes that the publication of this paper in English will encourage researchers in Sweden and Western Europe to write more intensively about political refugees and labor migrants from the former Yugoslavia.

Croatian political emigration after World War II

Croats began to migrate in great numbers from their ethnic and state territory at the end of the 19th century, partly due to general economic difficulties in Europe, but also due to the subordinate political position of Croatian regions in larger state communities (Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes / Kingdom Yugoslavia).³ After World War II and the creation of communist Yugoslavia, tens of thousands of Croats fled abroad, not wanting to live in a Yugoslav state, but also fearing repression by the newly established communist regime. Many of those who settled in South and North America, Western Europe, and Australia, engaged in political struggle aiming to create an independent and democratic Croatian state. In the first years of the Cold War, some of them even nourished the hope that a new world conflict would break out, this time between the capitalist West and the communist East. They expected that such a conflict would bring an end to the communist regime in Yugoslavia, and hoped that, with the support of the West, they would get the opportunity to create an independent Croatia. However, not only was a new world war fortunately avoided but the West did not show any inclination to break up Yugoslavia. Indeed, after the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Soviet bloc, it began with abundant support of the country, hoping that other communist countries would follow the Yugoslav example. This induced some Croatian émigrés to look for other forms of anti-Yugoslav activities.⁴

3 Ljubomir Antić, *Hrvati i Amerika*, Zagreb 1992.

4 Wollfy Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, Zagreb 2018, 15-22.

Some of the young political refugees, who fled to the West during the 1950s and later, believed that Croatia could only be liberated in a revolution. In a few instances, they attempted to infiltrate Yugoslavia and conduct diversions on roads and similar facilities as a way of starting an uprising. Some attacks were also made on Yugoslav embassies and consulates in Western countries. Such actions could not endanger the communist Yugoslavia, which, relying on widespread repression and with the support of the West and the East, destroyed and silenced the opposition in the country. In contrast, the Belgrade regime used those émigré actions as a justification for its killings and kidnappings of (mostly) Croatian émigrés, which occasionally claimed victims also among those who had no share in violent actions against Yugoslavia.⁵

Many Croatian émigrés continued to seek Western support for creating an independent Croatian state, but no longer on a radical anti-communist basis. The creation of the Croatian state was advocated as a way out of the repressive practices of the multinational Yugoslav community and as a modern echo of statehood, stretching in various forms from the early Middle Ages to the 20th century. An important element in the quest for full sovereignty was the ambition to reaffirm Croatian ties to Central European and Mediterranean traditions and culture.⁶

Since the mid-1970s, respect of human rights has come into the focus of world politics, especially since the signing of the Final Act of the 1975 Conference on European Security and Cooperation in Helsinki. In the document, the signatory countries, including Yugoslavia, pledged to respect human rights and the right of nations to self-determination. This inspired many Croatian émigrés to emphasize that Yugoslavia did not respect human rights, that a majority of Croats in various walks of life was subjected to intensive surveillance by the secret police, and that dissidents were persecuted, some of them in largely rigged trials, and were being imprisoned under inhuman conditions. Many Croats viewed therefore political repression as inexorable proof that Yugoslavia could be kept together only as a dictatorship. The repression (of varying intensity) was observed and occasionally condemned in the West but such disapprovals usually fell short of any support for Croatian statehood, mainly because it involved a risk to the existing block architecture.⁷

5 Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, 22-23; Wollfy Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, Zagreb 2018; Bože Vukušić, *HRB: Hrvatsko revolucionarno bratstvo: rat prije rata*, Zagreb 2010.

6 Srećko Listeš, *Emigrantska Hrvatska revija*, Split 2015; Joza Vrljić, *Povijest časopisa STUDIA CROATICA*, Buenos Aires 2019.

7 Wollfy Krašić, "Croatian National Congress' Actions During the Period Josip Broz Tito's Illness and Death", in: *Zbornik radova međunarodne znanstveno-stručne konferencije "Migracije i identitet: kultura, ekonomija, država"*, ed. Marina Perić-Kaselj, Zagreb 2020, 821-832.

Croatian immigrants in Sweden

After World War II, Croats emigrated *en masse*, first as political refugees and later as labor migrants, to FRG, but also Austria, France, Switzerland, and the Benelux countries.⁸ As for Scandinavia, by far the largest number of Croats immigrated to Sweden, largely owing to promising employment opportunities during the 1960s. At first, after a small number of Croats were granted political asylum in the 1950s, Sweden received in the early 1960s about 1,500 postwar refugees who had remained in Italian and Austrian camps. When an economic crisis with a high unemployment rate struck Yugoslavia in the early 1960s, the regime allowed many citizens to look for work and a better standard of living in capitalist countries.

Labor migrants began arriving in Sweden from the mid-1960s on what Yugoslavia called “temporary work” and this group became numerically dominant among Croats in Sweden. Most of them were employed in large factories and shipyards, but some began opening their businesses over time. Already in the second generation, many cases of moving up on the social ladder were recorded. The political organizations which advocated the creation of an independent Croatian state and appeared as early as the 1950s were followed during the 1960s by a broader social network in which sports and folklore culture was often blended with some elements of political émigré influence. For example, in Malmö in 1962 the Football Club “Croatia” was founded, in Gothenburg “Velebit” and “Croatia”, and in Hallstahammar “Zagreb”, in Bankeryd “Croatia”, etc. An entirely new type of organization was created in Stockholm on February 7, 1970, with the advent of the Society of Friends of Matica hrvatska “Matija Gubec”.⁹

As for the number of Croats in Sweden in the period covered by this paper, this topic was discussed in detail in the first issue of the HS’ herald – *Hrvatski glasnik* – in 1979. First of all, it was pointed out that there are a number of obstacles to the exact determination of the number of Croats in Sweden, due to the difficulty of determining the origin of people who immigrated from a multinational state like Yugoslavia. Indeed, it was explained that Sweden is an ethnically homogeneous country and therefore treats immigrants from Yugoslavia equally, which means that the Swedish authorities voluntarily recorded Croats who declared themselves as Croats as Yugoslavs. A parallel was also drawn with some other minority groups in Sweden, pointing out that Kurdish immigrants from Iran were registered as Iranians and Assyrian immigrants from Turkey as Turks. The growing interest in the national composition of emigrants in Yugoslavia in the second half of the 1960s led to the formation of an expert group in Sweden in 1969 to determine the national composition of emigrants from Yugoslavia. However, the Swedish researchers did not ask the respondents about their nationality. Although there was no official explanation for this unusual approach, to say the least, information leaked out that Yugoslav experts hired as assistants for the aforementioned project

8 Čizmić et al, *Iseljena Hrvatska*, 230-233, 261, 266-267, 269-270, 275-276, 290-295.

9 Čizmić et al, *Iseljena Hrvatska*, 280.

claimed that asking for such information would allegedly remind respondents of the trauma caused by national conflicts during the World War II. The *Hrvatski glasnik* believed that Yugoslav diplomacy was behind the mentioned interpretation and that it was aimed at weakening the unity of some national groups, especially Croats.

Respondents were asked questions about their religious and linguistic commitments. The answers to these questions should have been combined to obtain indirect data on nationality. However, instead of the terms Croatian and Serbian, the terms Serbo-Croatian, which was subsequently interpreted as Serbian, and Croato-Serbian, which was subsequently interpreted as Croatian, were used. In addition, when analyzing the data obtained, the answers to the questions on language affiliation were not combined with those on religion. The use of the terms Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian obviously had a confusing effect on some of the respondents, as 10% of them reported speaking Serbo-Croatian but being Catholic, while 1% of them reported speaking Croato-Serbian and belonging to the Orthodox faith. Since religious affiliation is a far more telling factor of national affiliation than the use of a variant of a hybrid and artificially created language in the mid-1950s, *Hrvatski glasnik* concluded that 1/3 of Croats in Sweden are on the aforementioned list of immigrants identified as Serbs. Finally, *Hrvatski glasnik* pointed out that about 6,000 Croats and their descendants have Swedish citizenship and are not counted among the Croatian minority on the Swedish immigrant list. In summary, *Hrvatski glasnik* estimates that about 18,000 Croats and their descendants live in Sweden.¹⁰ It seems that the estimates of *Hrvatski glasnik* were on the right track, because according to the book *Iseljena Hrvatska*, there were an estimated twenty thousand Croats living in Sweden at the beginning of the 21st century.¹¹

Society of Friends of Matica hrvatska “Matija Gubec”

DMG deserves special attention within the framework of this study because it initiated the creation of HS and to a large extent directed its activities until the founding of a sovereign Croatian state at the beginning of the 1990s. It emerged as a reflection of a shift towards more liberal elements in the leadership of the Croatian communist party during the mid-1960s. Many Croatian émigrés started to follow with much more attention the events in Yugoslavia and activities of political dissidents of the regime among the homeland Croats. It was believed that the opposition to Yugoslav centralism in Croatia could play a major role in creating more liberal political and economic conditions and enable free debate. An important segment among émigrés saw this as an opening for providing assistance to like-minded people in Croatia and explaining the Croatian struggle abroad. This tendency came to the fore particularly during the Croatian reform movement in the early 1970s, popularly called the Croatian Spring.

10 “Koliko je brojna hrvatska manjina”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January, 1979, 4-5.

11 Čizmić et al, *Iseljena Hrvatska*, 280.

It was a heterogeneous movement, whose main public figures were prominent intellectuals gathered around the oldest Croatian cultural institution Matica hrvatska (MH), and, especially in the final phase, students. It gained strength after the victory of reformists at a mid-January 1970 session of the leadership of the League of Communists of Croatia (*Savez komunista Hrvatske*, SKH). Reform-oriented Croatian communists wanted more autonomy for the Croatian federal state within Yugoslavia – the Socialist Republic of Croatia – primarily in the field of administration and economy and aspiring to a certain liberalization of the society and economy. They had a high degree of popular support but many, especially members of MH and the student movement, considered the reforms as only the first step towards larger independence. The Croatian Spring was violently quashed at the end of 1971, with mass expulsions from the SKH, arrests, trials, and harsh prison treatment of the most prominent members of the MH and the student movement, dismissals at work, and various other forms of persecution.¹²

MH's efforts to reaffirm Croatian national identity, primarily in the field of culture, resonated with many Croatian emigrants. In some cities of Western Europe and North America, societies of friends of MH were established. One of the firsts was founded in Sweden just a few weeks after the beginning of political liberalization in Zagreb and was named after the legendary leader of a Croatian peasant uprising from the 16th century – Matija Gubec. Branko Salaj, who had lived in Sweden since 1951 after being granted political asylum, was elected president. Salaj believed that much time and energy in the exile circles was spent on personal bickering about the past, especially about the period of World War II, instead of engaging in topics important for the future of the Croatian people. He wanted to focus on social and cultural work among Croats in Sweden, while identifying with the values of Swedish society and informing the Swedish public about the difficult position of Croats in the homeland and their desire to strengthen the statehood of the SRH.

While communicating with the MH, he had come into contact also with former Croatian communists, who were dissatisfied with Croatia's position in Yugoslavia, believing that it had been neglected and exploited. One of them was Zvonimir Komarica, president of the MH Foreign Relations Commission, formerly a high-ranking Yugoslav intelligence official, diplomat, and prominent member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*, KPJ) already before the WWII. Another one was Franjo Tuđman, a member of the KPJ-led wartime partisan movement, later a general and historian, who during the second half of the 1960s found himself under reprisals for disagreeing with the regime. After his stay in Croatia and talks with intellectuals from the MH leadership, Salaj concluded that these people, including the former communists, actually were in favor of creating a sovereign Croatian state, but believed that this goal could not be achieved under existing international circumstances. Therefore, they believed that, until the right moment is in, they must work on improving

12 Ante Čuvalo, *The Croatian national movement: 1966–1972*, New York 1990.

Croatia's position in Yugoslavia in various fields. In accordance with his views on how Croats should act under conditions of freedom in the West, Salaj concluded that they should be supported and in agreement with the leadership of MH initiated the establishment of the Society of Friends of Matica hrvatska "Matija Gubec".¹³

Since its founding, DMG found itself in a delicate situation: it was run by democratically and anti-Yugoslav oriented people but maintained ties with an institution (MH) that legally operated in Yugoslavia, which could be interpreted as an indirect recognition of Yugoslavia and its communist regime. This led, on the one hand, some Croatian émigrés to criticize the DMG as not being uncompromisingly anti-Yugoslav. On the other hand, it caused difficulties for the Yugoslav communist regime to act against an organization that in its activities emphasized cultural work in cooperation with a legal institution in Yugoslavia.¹⁴

DMG resolutely rejected the idea of using violence in anti-Yugoslav activities and any use of symbols that could be associated with the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH) which existed during World War II entirely dependent on the support of Italy and Germany.¹⁵ This left the Belgrade regime devoid of one of its cherished themes, namely attempts to discredit the Croatian opposition – at home and abroad – as supporters of fascism and as terrorists. A vast majority of both labor migrants and émigrés advocated the creation of a democratic Croatian state. Only an extraordinarily small number of them supported using violence in actions against Yugoslavia, and only an infinitesimal number engaged in it.¹⁶

13 Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, 379-383.

14 "Razgovor s Vladimirom Rozijanom, bivšim predsjednikom Hrvatskog saveza u Švedskoj", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February, 1980, 19.

15 Authorized record of the author's interview with Branko Salaj, Zagreb October 13, 2020. (Further: Interview with B.S.)

The DMG demonstrated its commitment to nonviolent activities soon after its founding. In April 1971, two Croats, Miro Barešić and Anđelko Brajković, broke into the Yugoslav Embassy to kidnap Ambassador Vladimir Rolović in order to secure the release of Croatian political prisoners in Yugoslavia. However, a physical altercation ensued in which Rolović was seriously wounded and died a few days later. The DMG distanced itself from the case, and as a symbolic expression of this orientation, flowers were also sent to the wounded Rolović in the hospital. Although the DMG raised strong objections to the Swedish state institutions about Rolović's chauvinistic behavior towards a part of the Croats in Sweden, the DMG wanted to fight exclusively in the field of propaganda and lobbying for the respect of the basic human and civil rights of the Croats both in Sweden and in Croatia. Interview with B.S.

16 Although there are some scholastic and journalistic books and treatises on the subject of the use of violence by a part of Croatian political emigration in actions against communist Yugoslavia, this subject is still waiting for a more comprehensive study. According to a hitherto unused 1988 Yugoslav intelligence service study, émigrés from Yugoslavia, which included Croats, Macedonians, Muslims, Kosovo Albanians, Slovenes, and Serbs, were responsible for over 200 serious "sabotage terrorist actions" and for an even larger number of attempts at such actions. No fewer than 91 Yugoslav and foreign citizens were killed in such acts of violence, and 328 were wounded. In addition to Yugoslav soil, attacks were also carried out on Yugoslav diplomatic missions, killing six Yugoslav diplomats and wounding fifteen. In Yugoslavia and on Yugoslav property abroad, these actions caused great

material damage. Savezni sekretarijat za unutrašnje poslove Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije, *Hronologija važnijih terorističkih akata protiv SFR Jugoslavije – 1945. – 1987.*, Beograd 1988, I.

According to the somewhat unsystematic and imprecise list from the above-mentioned study, Croatian émigrés were responsible for at least 190 different types of attacks on Yugoslav citizens and property in Yugoslavia and abroad, as well as on foreign citizens. Indeed, for a number of acts it was not stated who the perpetrators were, while in some cases it was said that the perpetrators were not identified. Similarly, for several acts it was stated that they were believed to have been committed by Croatian émigrés. The “sabotage-terrorist actions” also included a considerable number of cases in which Yugoslav flags were removed, torn and burned, especially those hoisted in front of Yugoslav diplomatic missions. In addition, the type of actions mentioned included, for example, the smashing of a store window in Cleveland in 1973 that sold newspapers, magazines, and other goods from Yugoslavia. Or the damage to the door of the consulate in Hanover in 1978. Similar damage to the buildings of Yugoslav diplomatic missions is also on this list. In addition, the list also includes several cases of slashed tires on cars in the FRG that had Yugoslav license plates. In several cases it is claimed that émigrés managed to enter Yugoslavia illegally to commit acts of violence, but it remains questionable how accurate such claims were. Certainly not in two cases - the entry of Vjekoslav Balin and Veljko Mašina in 1957 and of Balin the following year. Indeed, their purpose was to distribute promotional material and exchange information with like-minded people. Krašić, *Hrvatski pokret otpora*, 128.

It also holds Croatian émigrés responsible for the shooting down of a Yugoslav airliner over Czechoslovakia in 1972, although it has never been definitively confirmed that Croatian émigrés were behind the shooting down of the plane. “Česi falsificirali pad JAT-ovog aviona i rekord stjuardese”, <https://www.tportal.hr/vijesti/clanak/cesi-falsificirali-pad-jat-ovog-aviona-i-rekord-stjuardese-20090108> (visited July 15, 2022).

The list also contains information about the arrest of certain Croatian émigrés who were found in possession of weapons and/or explosives by security forces in Western countries, without specifying when and how they intended to use them. At the same time, it must be said that Yugoslav intelligence services often used their informants to encourage Croatian émigrés to acquire weapons and then passed information about them to Western police and intelligence services. See for example: Tomislav Mičić, *U potrazi za Hrvatskom : sjećanja jednog proljećara i političkog izbjeglice*, Zagreb 2019; “Terorizam Udbe u Njemačkoj”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 12, 1976, 9-10.

This type of action includes the explosion in Zagreb in 1975. According to the recently published book by historian Josip Mihaljević, it was a staged explosion used by the regime to crack down on a group of dissidents who maintained links with émigrés in Austria and the FRG. Josip Mihaljević, *Kako je operirala UDBA?: Operacija “Paromlin” i sudbina Vinka Markovića*, Zagreb 2022.

The list also includes information about the 1979 arrest and conviction of a group of Croats who allegedly planned attacks on a number of Yugoslav targets in Australia, as well as the poisoning of Sydney’s water supply. In the book *Reasonable Doubt*, Australian journalist Hamish McDonald proved that six Croats were sentenced to long prison terms based primarily on the false testimony of a Yugoslav intelligence service informant who had infiltrated among them. Hamish McDonald, *Reasonable Doubt: Spies, Police and the Croatian six*, Bondi Junction 2019.

On the other hand, Croatian émigrés infiltrated Yugoslavia on several occasions with the aim of carrying out diversions, guerrilla warfare, and even attempted uprisings. The most famous of these attempts was the 1972 invasion by nineteen members of the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood, in which nine Yugoslav soldiers were killed and ten wounded in the first two days of combat alone. Similarly, attacks by Croatian émigrés on Yugoslav diplomatic missions killed several diplomats and other officials and seriously or slightly wounded some. The attacks were motivated by the belief that oppression by the Yugoslav communist regime could only be met with violence. There have also been cases of explosive attacks in Yugoslavia that have resulted in civilian casualties, such as the 1968 explosion

The democratic orientation of DMG, as well as the social standing of its initiators in the Swedish society, contributed to a relatively quick affirmation of this Croatian group despite Yugoslav efforts to demonize it. A symbolically important expression of confidence in DMG was e.g. the statement of the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, who received a delegation of the society shortly after it was established. After the meeting, he told the media that the Swedish government would consider the proposals of the DMG for cultural cooperation with the Croatian minority while omitting to mention Yugoslavia with a single word. It was an implicit expression of respect for the desire of the Croats gathered in the DMG of not being identified with Yugoslavia and not being called Yugoslavs, which the newly established organization considered as an important marker. It may have been partly influenced by the fact that Palme had already known Salaj as president of a student body and could rely on his claim that DMG was a democratically oriented organization, whose actions would do no political harm other than criticizing Yugoslav diplomacy. At the beginning of the DMG's activities, the connection with the MH proved also to be a smart strategy – when responding to Yugoslav criticism, Swedish authorities could point to the cooperation of the DMG with an institution that legally operated in Yugoslavia.¹⁷

DMG sought to assemble Croats, especially labor migrants, by organizing various social and cultural events. It promoted popular MH magazines and books, organized visits to Swedish cultural institutions, carried out educational programs (such as e.g.

at a movie theater in Belgrade that killed one person, seriously wounded one, and lightly wounded 76 others. Bože Vukušić, *HRB: Hrvatsko revolucionarno bratstvo: rat prije rata*, Zagreb 2010.

The Yugoslav intelligence services killed, wounded or kidnapped over a hundred Croatian émigrés, among whom were advocates and executors of violent anti-Yugoslav actions. But those Croatian émigrés who had nothing to do with advocating or carrying out violent actions were also wounded, killed or kidnapped. Two girls were killed as collateral victims, three-year-old Dinka Domančinović in Buenos Aires in 1960 and nine-year-old Rosemarie Ševo in Italy in 1972. Pregnant Marijana Kulenović was also seriously injured in the assassination attempt on her father, Berislav Đuro Deželić, in Duesseldorf in 1965. Bože Vukušić, *Tajni rat Udbe protiv hrvatskoga iseljenništva*, Zagreb 2002.

In the second half of the 20th century, in Europe, but also in a large part of the world, numerous radical organizations were active, which were perceived by nations, parts of nations, and certain social groups as fighters for (national and/or class) liberation, while other nations, parts of nations, social groups, and authorities perceived such organizations as terrorist. Among the better-known organizations of this type were the Basque ETA, the Northern Irish IRA, the Palestinian PLO, or those that emphasized class rather than national struggle, such as the German RAF and the Italian Red Brigades. However, for comparison with the data on the use of violence by émigrés from Yugoslavia, the example of a part of the numerous Armenian diaspora will be used, who, after the political efforts for the recognition of the genocide of the Turks against the Armenians at the beginning of the 20th century by international community as well as the legal struggle for the rights of the Armenians in Turkey were unsuccessful, resorted to the use of violence to achieve political goals. In less than ten years, beginning in the mid-1970s, Armenian radicals carried out 190 attacks in 22 countries, killing 49 people and wounding 126. Among those killed were 25 Turkish diplomats. Wolfy Krašić, "Komunistička Jugoslavija i armenske terorističke organizacije", in: *Liber Amicorum: zbornik radova u čast profesora Iva Banca*, ed: Marijana Kardum and Stipe Kljajić, Zagreb 2021.

17 Interview with B.S.

series of comparative studies of Croatian and Swedish history) and it started a library service.¹⁸ At the same time it supported the strengthening of the autonomy of the SRH in relation to Belgrade¹⁹ and protested against the frequent chauvinistic behavior of some Yugoslav diplomatic staff and JS towards Croats in Sweden, and its efforts to force them to join clubs and societies controlled by Yugoslav authorities.²⁰ DMG thus became an alternative for many Croats who wanted to liberate themselves from the control of the Yugoslav regime.

With the violent end of the Croatian Spring at the beginning of December 1971, MH was forced to close its activities but its Swedish "outlet", DMG continued to operate. Moreover, in mid-December 1971, it organized in central Gothenburg one of the largest protest of its kind in Europe, in which large group of Croats protested against the suppression of liberal movement in Croatia.²¹ In the following years, the DMG repeatedly warned the Swedish public through protests, newspaper articles, and even a 24-hour hunger strike by some of its members in front of the Swedish Parliament in 1975 on the most important Yugoslav holiday – Day of the Republic (November 29) – that well-known Croatian intellectuals and public figures were being persecuted in Yugoslavia.²²

The ban on the work of MH in Croatia led to an important change of emphasis in the activities of DMG. Instead of acting as a Swedish branch of a Croatia-based institution, the DMG began stressing its identity as a Swedish immigrant organization that wants to represent its national group within the institutional framework provided by the Swedish law. To achieve this goal, it was desirable to unite under the same banner as many Croatian immigrant societies and clubs as possible, which shared the same or similar attitude towards the homeland reality. DMG, therefore, worked over a year very intensively to reach an agreement with other Croatian societies and clubs on the creation of an umbrella organization to which it would also transfer the financial state support it was receiving for its activities.²³

18 *Izveštaj o kontroli zakonitosti rada Matice hrvatske*, Zagreb 2002, 467, 469-470; "Razgovor s knjižničarom Marijanom Madunićem", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January, 1979, 9-10.

19 Communist Yugoslavia consisted of six republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia (with two autonomous provinces - Kosovo and Vojvodina) and Slovenia.

20 Interview with B.S.

21 According to Branko Salaj, one of the organizers, it was the largest protest of its kind in Europe, with around 1,500 people taking part. Interview with B.S.

Yugoslav diplomatic documents indicate that the consulate in Gothenburg estimates the number of participants in the demonstration at about 400, while the local press in Gothenburg reports about 1,000 demonstrators. The same source reports that Branko Salaj gave a speech at the protest alongside a certain Swede. HDA, Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom Izvršnog vijeća Sabora Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske (further: Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom IVS SRH), HR-HDA-1409, Box 107, Ambasada Stokholm: antijugoslavenske demonstracije u Švedskoj, December 20, 1971, 1.

22 Interview with B.S.

23 Ibid.

The Federation of Croatian Cultural, Sports, and Religious Societies in Sweden

Founding of the Federation of Croatian Cultural, Sports, and Religious Societies in Sweden and counter-activities by the Yugoslav authorities

The HS, founded on January 7, 1978, in Gothenburg, assembled several Croatian cultural and sports societies. Preparations for establishing the organization began in the fall of 1976. The first issue of its magazine – *Hrvatski glasnik* – explained that the organization was founded to improve the standing of Croats in Sweden and preserve their national identity.²⁴ In this endeavor they could not expect the help of the state from which they emigrated, i.e. Yugoslavia – on the contrary, it had to reckon with being maltreated by it in various ways. The HS was defined as an umbrella organization of cultural, sports, and religious societies of the Croatian minority. Any Croatian organization of the mentioned type, founded on democratic values and operating following the Swedish law, had the right to join, and advocate legitimate Croatian and Swedish interests. If a society was politically affiliated, it could let its cultural section join the HS. Swedish authorities recognized HS as a formal immigrant organization, which included the award of grants for work and the possibility of influencing the development of legislation and the adoption of administrative regulations of importance to immigrant Croats.²⁵

The Yugoslav intelligence services listed in 1982 following societies as members of the HS: Croatian Cultural and Sports Society “Velebit” from Gothenburg, Croatian Cultural Society Halmstad, Croatian Society “Zagreb” from Hallstahammar, Football Club “Croatia” from Malmö, Croatian society “Jadran” from Malmö, Young Croats “A. G. Matoš” from Malmö, “Croatian woman” from Malmö, Croatian Catholic Community in Malmö, Croatian Catholic Community in Olofström and Croatian Society “Knez Branimir” from Växjö. Of course, a member of HS was also DMG with branches in several Swedish cities.²⁶

Documents of the Yugoslav intelligence services assessed HS to be not only the largest and strongest but also the most dangerous organization of Croats in Sweden although it rejected radical nationalism and the use of violence in anti-Yugoslav activities. In line with the thesis that anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist Croats in the West enjoy the abundant help of parts of the government and other structures (army, intelligence, police, media), the intelligence reports claim that the establishment of HS was

24 *Hrvatski glasnik* published texts in both Croatian and Swedish. More important texts were published in both languages or an abridged version was published in Swedish. Articles from Swedish newspapers and magazines were also transcribed. From the second half of the 1980s, the number of texts in Swedish was greater than in the first three years of the magazine's publication.

25 “Hrvatski savez potreban”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January 1979, 1-2.

26 HDA, Služba državne sigurnosti Republičkog sekretarijata za unutrašnje poslove Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske (further: SDS RSUP SRH), HR-HDA-1561, Code 4, Number 232, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, Belgrade September 23, 1986, 19.

supported by Swedish authorities.²⁷ One of the founders of the HS, Branko Salaj, mentions on the contrary that in some contacts with the Swedish authorities one could feel reservations about the creation of the HS. They assumed realistically that the existence of such an organization would create difficulties in relations with Yugoslavia. However, according to Salaj, after initial doubts, Sweden more or less consistently followed its general model of multiculturalism and cooperation with immigrants. Respecting the will of most Croats in Sweden, it not only accepted the founding of HS but also approved e.g. that the state aid to DMG be transferred to the HS. Although JS, exaggerating the number of its members, received substantially higher amounts of money than HS, this aid was important to the Croats in HS not only financially but also symbolically.²⁸

The Swedish authorities were certainly aware of the popular support of HS among the Croats but could they have had some other inkling of the seriousness of the initiative to create the HS and of the connection of its leaders to the stifled Croatian Spring in the homeland? In late October 1977, just three months before the HS was founded, one of the leading Croat dissidents (and the future president of sovereign Croatia) Franjo Tuđman visited Sweden in utter conspiracy and met with Carl Bildt, then secretary of state in the Swedish government's presidency, Pierre Schori, international secretary of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the member of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee from the Centre Party Pär Granqvist. The visit was organized by Salaj and Vladimir Rozijan who at the same time were also deeply involved in preparing HS.²⁹

The official Yugoslav side considered the effort to create an umbrella organization for the Croats in Sweden with utmost seriousness. Since only a limited number of Croats were members of the JS-clubs, it was decided to try to attract them by creating several societies and clubs bearing names associated with Croatian national identity or geography. They were to be assembled in a brand-new Croatian Interest Community (in Swedish *Kroatiska Intressegemenskapen*, in Croatian *Hrvatska interesna zajednica*, HIZ) which would be treated as a separate entity within JS. The idea was to create an impression that HIZ-associated societies would enjoy autonomy in representing their Croatian countrymen. HS could, however, soon afterward publish excerpts from a confidential briefing by a high operative from Zagreb who had told the HIZ-leadership in no uncertain terms that they were to communicate with Swedish authorities only within the framework drawn by JS.³⁰

27 Ibid, 17.

28 Interview with B.S.

29 Interview with B.S.; James J. Sadkovich, *Tuđman: prva politička biografija*, Zagreb 2010, 219.

30 Interview with B.S.; Branko Salaj, "Trojanski konj 'hrvatskih' društava u jugo-režiji", *Poruka slobodne Hrvatske* (London), May 7, 1978, 9-10; Branko Salaj, "Uškopljeni mešetari nacionalnih osjećaja", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund) January-February, 1980, 1-2.

The official name of HIZ was Interest Association of Croatian Societies in Sweden (*Interesna zajednica hrvatskih društava u Švedskoj*), and since the end of 1981 it was called the Croatian Association (*Hrvatska zajednica*). JS called it the Croatian Interest Community, following the example of

The documents of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Croatia (*Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Hrvatske*, SSRNH), the largest socio-political organization in the SRH, which was subordinate to the SKH, and implemented its policies with a certain degree of autonomy, testify to the effort to attract a larger number of Croats to the JS and to the establishment of Croatian clubs within this organization. The program of activities to achieve the aforementioned goal, adopted in March 1978, stated that despite the better organization of labor migrants from Yugoslavia in recent years, some “negative phenomena” could be observed in Sweden, manifested in “a relatively smaller number and an insufficient proportion of citizens from SR Croatia and, in particular, of citizens of Croatian nationality in the clubs and associations of Yugoslav workers in Sweden.” Moreover, it was noted that Croatian “hostile emigration” has an impact on a part of labor migrants of Croatian nationality, and as one of the reasons for the described situation, the appearance of “unitarian perceptions in certain clubs and associations working on an all-Yugoslav basis” is highlighted. The last negative phenomenon, which resulted in a small number of Croats in Yugoslav associations in Sweden, is of particular importance for the topic of this paper, and, according to the SSRNH document, manifested itself in “inconsistent and insufficient implementation of linguistic tolerance and disregard for linguistic peculiarities according to Croatian literary language in the implementation of complementary schooling for students from SR Croatia.”³¹

the Macedonian Interest Community, the Slovenian Interest Community and the Serbian Interest Community. This name was used in *Hrvatski glasnik*, it is also a translation of the Swedish name and was therefore adopted by the author.

- 31 HDA, Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Hrvatske (further: SSRNH), HR-HDA-1228, Box 673, Program aktivnosti, Zagreb March 10, 1978, 1-2.

The term “unitarian” in this context would mean that the national characteristics of the nations living in Yugoslavia should be denied and that common Yugoslav elements should prevail in the sphere of language, culture, literature, sense of belonging to the nation and the state, etc. The behavior of officials and members in Yugoslav associations in Sweden and Western Europe in general, as well as the behavior of Yugoslav diplomats and other officials abroad, which was described unitarian, manifested itself in a negative attitude toward the cultivation of Croatian culture, the use of the Croatian literary language, the emphasis on elements of Croatian national identity, and, in general, in insults and disparagement on a national level. It often had a Serbian nationalist character.

Mijo Rafaj, a board member of the “Ljudevit Gaj” association from Ljungby, which was a member of the HIZ, described a meeting of representatives of Yugoslav societies in southern Sweden, where the concept of Yugoslavism was discussed. One of those present said in Serbian, “What interest communities[see note 30]! Throw all that in the garbage. Yugoslavism, well, must expand.” Since this remark was supported by the majority of those present, the representatives of Croatian societies loyal to the Yugoslav regime who wanted to join the regional organization JS gave up. Marijan Devčić, “Danas razgovaramo”, *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), June 1981, 9.

That the behavior described above led to discontent among Yugoslav citizens in Sweden of other nationalities, not only Croatian, is shown by the complaint of Petrašin Bojović, a Montenegrin, a member of the Yugoslav Teachers’ Association in Stockholm, who worked as a teacher of complementary schooling for children from Yugoslavia. Since he worked in a Swedish school that cooperated with a Zagreb elementary school, this complaint is among the documents of the Committee

Indirect evidence that the creation of the HIZ was an attempt to limit the actions led by the DMG is a document of the SSRNH from 1975, which also states that “the Croatian population /of SR Croatia and SR BiH/ remained largely unorganized and not involved in the work of our clubs and associations.” The reasons given for this situation are more or less similar or identical to those listed in the previously consulted document. It was also noted that there are all-Yugoslav and national clubs, including clubs of Slovenes, Macedonians and even Albanians from Kosovo, but no Croatian ones. Then an explanation for such a situation was given: “This is, among other things, a consequence of the attitude of our republic, which opposes the organization of workers from SR Croatia on a national basis and which is somewhat different from the attitude of some other republics.”³²

Although there was a radical policy shift toward the establishment of national societies for Croatian labor migrants in Sweden to at least partially thwart the activities of HS, various sources undoubtedly indicate that the HIZ was a failed project almost from the beginning. Notwithstanding the manifold support of the Croatian authorities for the activities of the HIZ, e.g. in the form of extensive help in organizing various cultural events, the resistance in JS to more independent activities and even to the existence of Croatian national clubs and the HIZ was too great. There is almost no issue of the HIZ magazine – *Hrvatska riječ* – that does not contain at least brief criticism of the activities of JS. It should be said that it had not only a national character, i.e. it contained only a protest against the discrimination of Croats in JS and Sweden

for Emigrants and Workers on Temporary Work Abroad of the SSRNH. In it, he accuses Bosiljka Milakara, the new advisor for education at the Yugoslav Embassy, whose Serb nationalist behavior, according to Bojović, brought the work of the association to an almost complete standstill, as most of its members left it. It is significant that at the end of the document there is a remark by the secretary of the Committee for Emigrants and Workers on Temporary Work Abroad, Dane Mataić, in which he states that he had the opportunity to work with Milakara in Switzerland and that she behaved the same way at the Consulate General in Zurich, which is why she was also fined by the SKH branch at the consulate. HDA, SSRNH, HR-HDA-1228, Box 673, Bilješka, Zagreb March 3, 1983, 1-2.

- 32 HDA, Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom IVS SRH, HR-HDA-1409, Box 103, Informacija o nekim problemima organiziranja radnika iz SR Hrvatske na teritoriju Švedske, Zagreb April 11, 1975, 2-3.

That the authorities in Zagreb, as well as in Belgrade, feared that the “federalization” of JS in Sweden after the federalization and even a certain confederation of Yugoslavia from the second half of the 1970s, under the conditions of limited control of the regime over its citizens in the European north, would lead to a disintegration of JS along national lines, is testified by the sentence from the report of the Yugoslav Embassy of 1987, which reads as follows: “Individual republics and SAP [Federal Autonomous Province] (SR Slovenia, SRH, SR Macedonia, SR Serbia, SAP Vojvodina) developed cooperation with the KOOs [Coordination Committees] of the national communities [this term refers to interest communities within JS], among which phenomena toward independence from the Yugoslav Federation were observed, which was overcome by the involvement of the DKP [diplomatic-consular representation] and corresponding personalities in the republics and SAP.” HDA, SSRNH, HR-HDA-1228, Box 686, Izvještaj Ambasade SFR Jugoslavije u Stockholmu, June 26, 1987, 3.

in general, but it was also directed against the alleged arbitrary behavior of individuals from the leadership of JS and their incompetence and ineffectiveness, which led to the weakening of JS.³³

The process of establishing Croatian societies loyal to the Yugoslav regime and admitting them to the HIZ began in 1978, and already in 1981 this process took on a declining tendency, as shown in the annual report on the work of the HIZ from the beginning of November 1981. The main reason for this can be found in the observation that the JS' treatment of HIZ was "more than stepmotherly". The author of the report was so outraged by the behavior of the leadership of JS that he wrote that the HIZ was being pressured to abandon JS so that Croatian societies could then be openly declared the enemy. The document also describes the course of the JS annual meeting, which was marked by electoral fraud and violations of the Statutes, which is why Croatian members refused to participate in the work of the Presidium, while among the 90 elected delegates representing societies and clubs there was not a single Croatian. The annoyance with the way the leadership of JS worked was so great that the proposal was made that in the future HIZ should independently apply for funding for its work from the relevant Swedish institutions.³⁴ A year later, in the December 1982 issue of *Hrvatska riječ*, Mirko Benko, HIZ president, had to make a damning statement for HIZ: "Croatian immigrants in Sweden are increasingly finding refuge, intentionally or unintentionally, in societies that show open hostility toward Yugoslavia."³⁵

During the stay of the delegation of the Yugoslav Assembly in the Swedish Parliament in 1987, there was also a meeting with representatives of JS. The president of JS, Miodrag Smiljanić, said on that occasion that the number of "loyal Croatian societies" had decreased and that of the 128 societies in JS only four were Croatian. Lest the situation turn out to be catastrophic, he added that "many" are members of all-Yugoslav societies, which is disputed in many places in this paper. For comparison, he said that HS is becoming more active and has five societies in Gothenburg alone, while the society "Zagreb" in the same city, which is a member of HIZ and JS, is in a "crisis". Smiljanić closed this part of the conversation with the information that HS gathers "a significant part of our citizens".³⁶

33 See for example: Mirko Benko, "Društveni život ili društveno životarenje?", *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna) June, 1981, 10-11; "U vezi jednog otkaza", *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna) June, 1981, 15; "Naš jezik – naša kultura", *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), February, 1982, 2-3; Mirko Benko, "Kakav nam statut treba?", *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), May, 1982, 2-3; "Najvažniji su članovi", *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), May, 1982, 4-5; Mirko Benko, "Da se Vlasi ne dosjete", June, 1982, 19. Conflicts between HIZ and JS were also recorded in *Hrvatski glasnik*. See the following articles: Branko Salaj, "Uškopljeni mešetari nacionalnih osjećaja", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February, 1980, 1-2; Observator, "Uz takve prijatelje neprijatelj nepotreban" *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February, 1980, 13-15; "Bura u Jugosavezu ne jenjava", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February, 1980, 24.

34 HDA, SSRNH, HR-HDA-1228, Box 686, Izvještaj o radu, November 7-8, 1981, 1-5.

35 Mirko Benko, "Volja, ambicije i znanje", *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), December, 1982, 2.

36 HDA, Republički komitet za odnose s inozemstvom Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske (further: RKIP SRH), HR-HDA-2058, Dopis predsjednika Skupštine SFRJ Ive Vrandečića Izvršnom vijeću Sabora SRH, Belgrade April 27, 1987, 1.

Accordingly, during the 1980s HS continued to bring together a vast majority of organized Croats in Sweden. Potential conflict with JS and HIZ, over who is the true representative of Croats in Sweden, subsided rather quickly as the HS membership continued to increase.³⁷ Articles published in *Hrvatski glasnik*, exposed instances of inappropriate behavior among JS-leaders and members, and the Swedish public could read about it since *Hrvatski glasnik* also published many articles in Swedish. Some texts also dealt with organizational issues, describing the JS as a parastatal organization of a communist state that violates basic democratic norms on which the Swedish state and society are based and in whose ranks Swedish media reported even criminal activities. HS, on the other hand, was depicted as a true representative of the Croats in Sweden, which insisted on respecting Swedish laws and was committed to the ideals of democracy.³⁸

Sources of various provenances speak about the superiority of HS in terms of the number of members over HIZ. Salaj claims that HS had a “far greater membership” than HIZ. However, he adds that the proportion of the higher educated people may have been slightly higher in HIZ. Some people in free professions joined HIZ clubs because they did not want to have problems with the Yugoslav regime, could get rebates on Yugoslavia-bound flights, etc.³⁹ According to Yugoslav intelligence documents, in 1984 HS consisted of twelve societies and between 3,500 and 4,500 members, most of whom were labor migrants.⁴⁰ This fact testifies to the enormous failure of the Yugoslav regime. Most HS-organized labor migrants who owned Yugoslav passports and revisited Yugoslavia regularly, preferred to risk a possible conflict with the regime (with resulting threats and blackmail that their passports would be confiscated, that they would be detained in Yugoslavia, etc.) rather than to join JS.⁴¹

37 “Benko: Totalna moralna dekadencija”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), December 1980, 8-9; “Riječ, dvije o HIZ-i”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), May-June, 1981, 14.

38 “Bez kartanja i alkohola nema jugoklubova”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), May-August, 1980, 8-9; Mirko P. “Krade, kockanje i prevare”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), May-June, 1981, 15.

In 1978, the renowned Swiss magazine *Neue Zuercher Zeitung* published a detailed text in its February 18/19 issue on the activities of associations for labor migrants from Yugoslavia in Switzerland, asking “to what extent foreign parastatal organization that prevent the integration of foreigners into our society and restrict their opportunities for development, which they are entitled to under Swiss law, should be tolerated.” The text describes several cases of “political espionage” that take place “in the gray area between recreational activities, complementary schooling, propaganda and psychological pressure.” Part of the text is subtitled “Yugoslav Clubs on a Consulate Leash.” HDA, SSRNH, HR-HDA-1228, Box 674, Untitled document, March 14, 1978, 1-3.

39 Interview with B.S.

40 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Code 4, Number 238, Aktivnost hrvatske neprijateljske emigracije u Švedskoj (1984. – 1987.), Belgrade October 7, 1987, 5.

41 Without looking at the archives of JS, it is impossible to say exactly how many members this organization had. According to a document from the Yugoslav Embassy in Stockholm in early 1972, about 40,000 workers from Yugoslavia and their family members were in Sweden for so called temporary work. Of these, 44% were from Serbia, 29% from Croatia, 12% from Slovenia, 8% from Macedonia, 6% from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 1% from Montenegro. JS was founded in May 1969 under

In the middle of 1988, a delegation of Croat members of JS, i.e. HIZ, arrived in Zagreb for discussion with the SRH authorities. They reported that attracting and organizing Croats in JS was in “the biggest crisis” since the organization existed, and one of those present added that the situation was “catastrophic”. The delegation stated that there are six Croatian clubs within the JS, three of them existing only formally, and the remaining three with few members and activists. By comparison, Macedonians, Serbs and Slovenes were said to be much better organized and have more members in their clubs.⁴²

Croatian labor migrants did not respond well to invitations to join Yugoslav clubs throughout Western Europe, and most of those who visited such clubs did so solely for entertainment, not for celebrating Yugoslav state holidays, attending ideologically indoctrinated lectures, and the like.⁴³ In Sweden, such a trend was particularly pronounced, as Croatian labor migrants who were wary of the Yugoslav communist regime had a quality alternative in the form of HS, in which they could nurture various components of their national identity and, politically emancipated, directly present their views to the Swedish authorities.

Croatian Federation and integration into Swedish society

HS fought for the interests of its members and the preservation of Croatian national identity by encouraging integration into Swedish society, while JS tried in various ways to block the influences of Swedish society on its membership. This difference was most pronounced in respect to participation in Swedish political life. When immigrants in Sweden were given the right to vote in the 1976 municipal elections, Croatian societies, especially DMG, organized meetings between Swedish politicians and Croatian

the name Federation of Associations and Clubs of Yugoslavs (*Savez udruženja i klubova Jugoslovena*). HDA, Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom IVS SRH, HR-HDA-1409, Box 107, Izvod iz zapisnika sa sastanka u Ambasadi SFRJ, January 6-7, 1972, 1.

HS estimated that the Croat and Serb communities in Sweden, referring to both labor migrants and émigrés, were equal in number (see note 10).” Koliko je brojna hrvatska manjina”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January, 1979, 5.

At the joint meeting of the Republic Council for International Relations and the Republic Council for the Protection of the Constitutional Order, held in Zagreb at the end of April 1979, it was reported that only between ten and fourteen percent of Yugoslav labor migrants in Western Europe meet in Yugoslav clubs. HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Code 10.2., Number 69.-2., Sjednica Republičkog savjeta za međunarodne odnose i Republičkog savjeta za zaštitu ustavnog poretka Zagreb April 24, 1979, 189.

In the HIZ magazine *Hrvatska riječ* at the end of 1980, it was claimed grandiloquently that JS was gathering “almost half of our people in Sweden,” referring to labor migrants from Yugoslavia. “Jugoslavenski savez. 10 godina”, *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), December 1980, 4.

From the above it can be roughly concluded that JS had several thousand members.

42 HDA, SSRNH, HR-HDA-1228, Box 673, Siže zapisnika sa sastanka s predstavnicima klubova i društava naših građana iz SR Hrvatske koji se nalaze na radu u Švedskoj organiziranih u okviru Jugoslavenskog saveza, Zagreb July 11, 1988, 1-2.

43 Čizmić et al, *Iseljena Hrvatska*, 241.

immigrants. It was widely interpreted as a step in integrating Croats into Swedish society. JS, on the other hand, forbade its societies and clubs to let representatives of Swedish political parties into their premises in order not to “bring discord among the united brothers”, as *Hrvatski glasnik* commented a bit viciously. The leadership of JS claimed that the Swedish political system and the struggle of interests within it were not up to the Yugoslav example, based on the blissful working of the so-called workers’ self-management.⁴⁴ The real reason for rejecting political debates was the fear that internal Yugoslav national and class divisions would come to light.

On February 26, 1976, the Federal Conference of the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Yugoslavia adopted positions and conclusions on the question of participation of Yugoslav citizens in the local elections in Sweden. The adoption of the above-mentioned Swedish law was considered a domestic matter of Sweden, and the position was taken that each Yugoslav citizen should decide independently whether to participate in the elections or not. However, as the source in the previous paragraph indicates, it was decided not to allow representatives of Swedish political parties to enter the premises of Yugoslav societies, present programs, and campaign. It was also decided that it would not be acceptable for Yugoslav citizens to join Swedish political parties.⁴⁵

Some of the leading Yugoslav politicians made statements along the same lines, namely that Yugoslav citizens can vote freely in the Swedish local elections, but that political campaigning cannot be conducted in the premises of Yugoslav societies. President Josip Broz Tito even took the liberty of suggesting which option to choose in the elections, saying the following: “Let everyone vote according to his/her discretion, let him/her decide for whom will vote. I believe that most of our workers here will know how to orient themselves properly (! A/N).”⁴⁶ On the other hand, in addition to banning campaign appearances on the premises of Yugoslav societies in Sweden, the Yugoslav authorities tried in various other ways to discourage their citizens from participating in the Swedish municipal elections. Swedish journalist Bengt Göransson told Swedish Radio that the Belgrade-based political weekly *Ilustrovana Politika* devalues the Swedish political system and elections in various ways, calling them a “children’s farce.” He added that there were similar articles in some other Yugoslav newspapers and magazines.⁴⁷ However, the “persuasion” did not remain in the newspaper articles. For example, the official newspaper of the Swedish Head Immigration Office, *Ny i Sverige*, wrote about the Yugoslav embassy’s pressure on Yugoslav citizens not to participate in the elections.⁴⁸

44 “Hrvatski savez želi informirati o izborima 1979”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January, 1979, 7.

45 HDA, Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom IVS SRH, HR-HDA-1409, Box 105, Jugoslavenski radnici na privremenom radu u Švedskoj, Belgrade May, 1976, 11-12.

46 “Je li Hrvatima opasno sudjelovati u izborima?”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 13, 1976, 12; “Ne postoje političke smetnje da Jugosloveni glasaju”, *Naše novine*, inset *List u listu* (Stockholm), September 17, 1976, 1.

47 “Je li Hrvatima opasno sudjelovati u izborima?”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 13, 1976, 12.

48 I.K., “Švedski novinar: Neprijateljska politika Jugoslavije spram useljenika”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 15, 1976, 8, 16.

During the autumn of 1979, the HS organized well-attended meetings of its members with representatives of individual Swedish political parties in Hallstahammar, Halmstad, Gothenburg, Jönköping, Malmö, Olofström, and Stockholm. The first meeting in Gothenburg in August was attended by about 120 people, and members of the center-right Moderate Party introduced themselves. The last meeting in that city was attended by about 180 people, and Liberals and Social Democrats introduced themselves. Several meetings were held in each city, e.g. six in Olofström, three in Jönköping, while several societies within the HS organized several own meetings in Malmö, etc. In addition to informing about Swedish society and the electoral system, party candidates used to discuss even some local issues important to Croats.⁴⁹

The issue of complementary schooling in the Croatian language was often mentioned. For example, at the DMG meeting in Stockholm, the Croats thanked Paul Grabö, city councilor for schooling issues and president of the city committee for immigrants [Center Party], for supporting the proposal that Croatian be recognized as the so-called native language for Croatian children in primary school. His stand contributed to the request being resolved positively. The importance of contact with local politicians was reflected in the statement of Olle Palmborg, head of Närradio (Community Radio) in Malmö, who said that the DMG request to participate in local radio broadcasts resulted in a visit by Yugoslav embassy officials, who unsuccessfully tried to persuade him not to comply with that request. At the meeting in Malmö, representatives of all five Swedish political parties agreed with the proposal of Ivo Biloglav, president of the cultural and artistic society “Jadran”, to speed up the process of allocating the city’s premises to Croatian societies.⁵⁰

Mate Balić, secretary of the “Jadran” society, assessed that textbooks from Yugoslavia indoctrinate Croatian children with communism and the Yugoslav state idea and demanded that their use be ended. Newspaper *Skånska Dagbladet* reported this statement, writing that representatives of the center-right political parties (Center party, conservatives, liberals) supported the Croatian minority in this matter. They said also that they knew that Croats were subjected to repression by the Yugoslav communist regime and that they would work on updating the issue. Their position was also reported on regional television. Most of the meetings organized by HS throughout Sweden were also covered in various local media.⁵¹ Yugoslav intelligence services diligently recorded these meetings in their records – with numerous errors in the spelling of Swedish names, indicating that their informants and officials were relatively uneducated and poorly versed in local circumstances.⁵²

49 V.R., “Hrvatska društva primjer drugima”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February 1980, 9-11.

50 Ibid, 10-11.

51 Ibid, 11.

52 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 80.

An important event in the public affirmation of HS in mid-April 1980 was its inclusion in the so-called Small Reference Group (Lilla referensgruppen), charged with the cooperation of the State Immigrant Authority with smaller immigrant organizations. The first two-day conference discussed important issues such as radio programs in immigrant languages, the role of immigrant organizations in the project "Improving Swedish knowledge among Immigrants", assistance to the activities of immigrant organizations, and the teaching of the Swedish language. Croats were thus given the opportunity to institutionally represent their interests before the Swedish authorities independently of Yugoslavia and the JS.⁵³ The documents of the Yugoslav intelligence services reported that the HS was officially involved in the work of state institutions and considered it as a severe failure for Yugoslavia in controlling its former and current citizens. Acting as an extended arm of the government during the first years of coexistence, the JS representatives even refused to participate in meetings with competent Swedish institutions or the media if the representatives of HS were co-invited.⁵⁴

HS members were increasingly given the opportunity to present their problems at the highest state level. As many as seven Swedish ministers received HS representatives during the late 1970s and the 1980s. The last of the ministers to receive a HS delegation was Immigration Minister Georg Andersson in April 1987. On that occasion, the minister confirmed that HS had done much to improve the position of the Croatian minority in less than ten years of existence and that no one among the Swedes believed anymore in (the Yugoslav) accusations that HS members were fascists and terrorists.⁵⁵

Many HS members have been active in Swedish public life and the media, as well as in the social life of their local communities. The initiator of the creation of HS Salaj was not a member of any political party, but as a student leader in the late 1950s, and later as a director in an Employers' Federation, he was acquainted with people of some influence. As there were some well-known social democrats among them, such as Olof Palme and Gunnar Myrdal, the Yugoslav intelligence services mistakenly registered him as an SDP member and saw this as one of the reasons why Sweden accepted a specific way of organizing Croatian immigrants.⁵⁶

Most Croatian émigrés, especially those who fled to the West immediately after World War II, were radically anti-communist and sought support from right-wing or liberal-oriented political parties.⁵⁷ The situation in this regard began to change when some (especially younger) émigrés launched the presumption that the struggle for the

53 "Hrvatski savez u važnom tijelu", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), May-August, 1980, 18.

54 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Aktivnost hrvatske neprijateljske emigracije u Švedskoj (1984. – 1987.), 56-57; Interview with B.S.

55 B.S. "Ministar prijazna osmijeha i željezne šake", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lindigo), May, 1987, 3.

56 Interview with B.S.; HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 52.

57 Jure, Vujić, "Međunarodni aspekti komunizma u razdoblju hladnoga rata i hrvatska politička emigracija", In: *Društveno povijesni kontekst političkog djelovanja u hrvatskom iseljeništvu: organizacije, stranke, pokreti*, ed. Marina Perić Kaselj, Zagreb 2020, 86-102.

Croatian state must have primarily a national, but not an ideological character. A few even voiced the idea of looking for allies in the East.⁵⁸ Others sought to develop good relations with left-wing political parties in some Western countries, trying to explain to politicians and the public there that their hostile attitude toward communist Yugoslavia did not necessarily make them anti-leftist.

This created certain problems for Yugoslav propaganda because it portrayed all Croatian émigrés, as well as dissatisfied people in the country, as radical right-wingers and fascists. Yugoslavia used this construction to discredit Croatian émigrés in the West, accusing some foreign politicians, intellectuals, and journalists of helping “fascists” whenever they would make a decision or a move in favor of Croatian political emigration.⁵⁹ In Sweden, anti-Yugoslav Croatian immigrants managed to establish close contacts even with left-wing political parties, and some of them were members of the SDP.

The most prominent among them was Vladimir Rozijan, who emigrated to Sweden in 1963. In an interview with *Hrvatski glasnik* in 1980, as the first president of the HS, he stated that he was an expert on the labor market, an officer in the Swedish army, and a member of the SDP. Asked if his criticism of Yugoslavia caused him any problems, he said that there were different views within the party and that he had never had any problems due to his position because “the SDP has developed a sense of solidarity for oppressed peoples”.⁶⁰ In addition to Salaj, the Yugoslav intelligence services paid great attention also to Rozijan. Thus, they noted e.g. that in 1978 Rozijan was elected vice-president of the Council for the Cultural Affairs of Immigrants in Malmö, a body charged with advising the city institutions in their work with immigrants. The Yugoslav intelligence claimed that Rozijan was using this position to act against the JS and Yugoslav diplomats in Sweden and that he had succeeded in obtaining city funding for the HS members. Yugoslav consul in Malmö managed to prevent Rozijan from being reelected vice-president of the Council in 1979 by spreading claims that he was a member of a “terrorist organization”. Even subsequently the Yugoslav intelligence services considered the participation of HS members in the work of local government institutions to be dangerous.⁶¹ It is one of many examples of how Yugoslavia viewed legitimate work of affirming the Croatian minority in Sweden as dangerous to its interests and sought to prevent or at least limit it.

58 Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i hrvatska politička emigracija*, 139-206, 219-223, 293-312; Savezni sekretarijat za unutrašnje poslove. Hrvatsko narodno vijeće. Aktivnost, organizacija i unutrašnji odnosi. Belgrade January, 1980, 225-233.

59 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 72-73, 77.

60 “Razgovor s Vladimirom Rozijanom, bivšim predsjednikom Hrvatskog saveza u Švedskoj”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February, 1980, 19.

61 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 79.

After an interruption of several years during the first half of the 1980s, *Hrvatski glasnik* started publishing again in 1986.⁶² Its editor was Zdenko Naglić, who gained his publishing experience as a board member of the magazine *Socialistiskt Forum*.⁶³ HS-affiliated members joined other Swedish political parties. For example, the president of the Football Club "Croatia" from Malmö, Ivo Vidakušić, was a member of the Center Party. Ante Bužančić was also active as the deputy secretary of the same party in the municipality of Fösie.⁶⁴

One of the most important forms of activity of HS was organizing from 1980 onward annual Croatian Culture Festivals. Their aim was twofold. One of them was bringing together Croatian societies scattered throughout the vast expanses of Sweden and make them aware of the need for joint performances. Also, the impressive program of song, dance and recitations, handicraft exhibitions, and the like served to give Swedish guests some idea of Croatian culture but served also in itself as a sign of the seriousness of the HS activities. Occasionally even Swedish folklore ensembles participated and Swedish retirees were invited.⁶⁵

Every year, the HS would honor one or two Swedish public figures whose actions during the past year were found particularly discerning. They would be awarded the title of "Honorary Krabat" (*krabat* in Old Swedish described Croat, in modern Swedish puckish youngster) as well as the laurel-wreathed badge of the then-banned MH.⁶⁶ Numerous Swedish politicians and public figures, to begin with from the local level and then ever higher on the scales of national public life, attended the festivals which grew in importance. Some 100 performers took part before a modest audience of about 500 Croats in 1980. In 1987, the Yugoslav intelligence, which sometimes significantly underestimated numbers, reported that the festival was attended by about 1.500 visitors and 200 performers and that the football club "Croatia" played a friendly match with veterans of the trophy-winning Swedish club "Malmö".⁶⁷

62 *Hrvatski glasnik* was the result of investment of free time and partly own financial resources by a small number of HS activists who were not professional editors and journalists. The discontinuation of the magazine was due to financial difficulties and the busyness of the people who had founded it with their own businesses and other activities of HS.

63 Urednički odbor, "Kao Feniks iz pepela", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lindigo) May, 1986, 2.

64 Mirko Barbir, Ante Nižić, "Nogometaš u centru", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January, 1979, 14; JM, "Kako se stvarao političar", *Hrvatski glasnik*, May-August, 1980, 19.

65 "Golem uspjeh Hrvatske smotre u Göteborgu", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund) October-December, 1981, 1, 5-10; Interview with B.S.; Ivo Biloglav's e-mail to author, January 27, 2021.

Entire families were involved in social activities through HS. Among the many examples are certainly the spouses and members of the DMG Tomislav and Tonka Klobučar from Bankeryd. Interview with B.S.

66 Interview with B.S.

67 "Još Hrvatska (u Švedskoj) ni propala", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), September-December, 1980, 1, 14-16; "Hrvatska smotra87 – Malmö", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lindigo), January, 1988, 4; HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 22-25, 80-81; HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Aktivnost hrvatske neprijateljske emigracije u Švedskoj (1984. – 1987.), 22-25, 51-54, 58-59; Interview with B.S.

Prominent “Krabats” included SDP member of parliament and union official at Volvo Ralf Lindström, one of the Liberal Party leading personalities Andres Küng, Education Minister Ulla Tillander from Center Party, and the well-known publicist, foreign policy expert, and president of the Swedish branch of the Pan-European Union Arvid Fredborg.⁶⁸ The best known among honorary Croats was Liberal Party President Bengt Westerberg, who received the honorary title at the 1988 festival and met at this occasion Vladimir Šeks, a Croatian dissident and subsequently one of Croatia’s leading politicians in the 1990s. As soon as Westerberg was awarded the prize JS activated an avalanche of lies and deceptions showing the extent to which the organization was directly subservient to Belgrade authorities.⁶⁹

As already explained, the presence of persons from Swedish public life at Croatian Culture Festivals was interpreted as an anti-Yugoslav move. Salaj believes, however, that especially in the beginning most of the honored Swedes wanted to express their general support for immigrants as valuable members of Swedish society and primarily stand up in defense of the human rights that Yugoslavia had violated. In the beginning, the HS was also primarily focused on acting within the Swedish framework, while the DMG, whose “parent company” in the homeland – MH – was banned by the Yugoslav authorities, became more engaged in public protests and demonstrations against the regime. As repression in Yugoslavia hardened in the 1980s – the violent suppression of protests in Kosovo, the trials to Croatian intellectuals, the strengthening of Greater Serbia ideology among Serbian communists, etc. – the entire HS started to openly support the demands for an independent Croatian state. Among the Honorary Krabats, Fredborg and Küng were most prone to support such demands from the outset. Especially Küng, who was of Estonian origin, and as a member of the occupied nation, easily identified with the anti-Yugoslav attitude of the HS membership.⁷⁰

The struggle for the right to use the Croatian literary language

The question of languages – their name and content – has been a major scientific and political issue in Yugoslavia almost since the creation of the state. The agreement of some linguists reached in the 1830s to start using one regional variant as the common language of Serbs and Croats encountered major practical problems and was never truly implemented. In the daily life of the two peoples, two language standards were gradually formed, Croatian and Serbian. In the common state created after World War I (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, since 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia), Serbs played a dominant role and tried to use government institutions to impose their standard on the entire linguistically heterogeneous area. Under a single name – Serbo-Croato-Slovenian – it was used as a unifying political factor.⁷¹

68 Interview with B.S.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Marko Samardžija, *Hrvatski jezik i pravopis od ujedinjena do kraja Banovine Hrvatske: (1918.-1941.)*, Zagreb 2012.

Even in a federally organized communist Yugoslavia, the language problem emerged as one of the politically important issues to be used in strengthening the country's unity. The principle of the uniqueness of each of the two languages was accepted during World War II and the first Yugoslav Constitution was read in four languages – Croatian, Macedonian, Slovenian and Serbian – in the Belgrade Assembly in early 1946. The proclamation and partial respect for the equality of nations in Yugoslavia during and in the immediate period after the end of the World War II was a consequence of the KPJ's desire to attract a greater number of members of non-Serbian nations who were dissatisfied with the centralized nature of the first Yugoslav state. After the war victory and consolidation, however, the Yugoslav communist regime increasingly sought to unify the newly created state, including in the area of language. In 1954, a group of 25 linguists and literates (fifteen from Serbia, seven from Croatia, three from Bosnia and Herzegovina) signed the Novi Sad Literary Agreement resolution, which was supported by another 64 scholars and cultural figures. The document created the basis for a new literary language, which had two names and two variants – Croato-Serbian and Serbo-Croatian. Federal administration and institutions, as well as the military and repressive apparatus, used to a large extent the Serbian variant. And not only that – although the 1963 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Croatia stipulated that the official language in Croatia is Croato-Serbian, Serbo-Croatian has been imposed in various areas – such as administration, media and science. In a strong 1967 reaction to such practice, all important Croatian cultural and linguistic institutions demanded that the name and use of the Croatian literary language be constitutionally guaranteed and respected. The Declaration adopted on that occasion (*Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskoga književnog jezika*) marked the beginning of deeper changes that led to the affirmation of the liberal-national movement, so-called Croatian Spring, but also the introduction of confederate elements into the Yugoslav constitution in 1974. Thus, the Yugoslav republics and provinces were given the opportunity to create a language policy and make decisions in this area. The SRH Constitution of the same year stipulated that the Croatian literary language would be used in public use. It was added that it is the standard form of the national language of Croats and Serbs in Croatia, called Croatian or Serbian. However, the use of different variants of the “common language” continued in various forms (for example, some writers willingly mixed Croatian and Serbian language norms and words), and tensions continued (for example, in the form of accusations of not using Croatian or Serbian words on certain occasions). Moreover, in the mid-1980s, as the economic situation in Yugoslavia became increasingly difficult and tensions between nations also became more pronounced, there was a renewed attempt at linguistic homogenization, as part of the regime's efforts to strengthen its weakened role in society. In late 1988, the Yugoslav Constitutional Court even adopted a decision on the unconstitutionality of the 1974 clause of the Croatian Constitution dealing with the use of the Croatian literary language. However, a broad wave of

protests in Croatia prevented the Croatian Parliament from adopting the said decision in the form of a constitutional amendment.⁷²

Among immigrant Croats in Sweden, there was strong opposition to being called and recorded by the Swedish authorities as Yugoslavs, and they did not want to be officially addressed in the Serbo-Croatian language. Tensions over language practice and language names, which began immediately after the arrival of larger immigrant groups in the mid-1960s and continued for the next 30 years, deserve special research. Suffice it to mention here that as early as 1974, the DMG published a Swedish translation of Branko Franolić's booklet *Croatian Literary Language – Historical Review* and that the language issue was crucial in long and heated debates on complementary schooling of “native” language for immigrant children, the training of interpreters, etc.⁷³

The members of the HS put much effort into convincing Swedish school authorities to publish a Swedish-Croatian dictionary. It materialized in mid-October 1985 and contained about 17,000 of the most used words, of which about 1,000 were administrative terms. It also explained important common Swedish words and phrases.⁷⁴ The process of preparing the dictionary, took almost a decade, as work on the project began in the spring of 1977. Using the arguments of Croatian linguists the HS made great efforts to prove that the Croatian literary language is a self-contained and that Croats in Sweden want to use it. The option of publishing a separate Swedish-Croatian dictionary was supported also by the HIZ. The fact that the project was thus supported by otherwise opposed groupings among Croats was a slap in the face of the Yugoslav regime's official unitarian language policies.⁷⁵ Only a year and a half before the dictionary was published, a new Yugoslav cultural attaché (sent from Zagreb) arrived in Sweden with the foremost task of preventing the publication of the dictionary. After the publication Yugoslav media published a barrage of attacks on Swedish authorities which seems singularly strange a third of a century later when Croatian is one of 24 official EU-languages.⁷⁶

Struggle for complementary schooling in the Croatian language

The Croatian language was widely used in the SRH school system. However, when children, accompanying their labor migrant parents, found themselves in foreign school systems of Western Europe and complementary learning of their native language,

72 Artur R. Bagdasarov, “O etnojezičnoj politici u socijalističkoj Jugoslaviji”, *Filologija*, 71, 2018, 25-55. In the wake of the Croatian Spring, in 1971, Croatian scientific and cultural institutions broke the Novi Sad agreement.

73 Interview with B.S.

74 “Švedsko-hrvatski rječnik”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lindigo), October, 1986, 4.

75 “Švedsko-hrvatski rječnik niz vodu?”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), March-April, 1980, 9-11; “Rječnik stranputicom”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), May-August, 1980, 1; “Rječničke zbrke”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), October-December, 1981, 11.

76 Branko Salaj, “Progoni hrvatskog jezika”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lindigo), May, 1986, 4-5; Interview with B.S.; Mate Balić's e-mail to author, December 17, 2020.

problems arose because most countries accepted teachers sent by the Yugoslav authorities or recommended by the Yugoslav diplomatic and consular network. These teachers were often Serbs, who taught in Serbo-Croatian, so Croatian children were left without the possibility of choosing their language “variant”. This widespread and serious problem was registered even in official Yugoslav documents. Besides, textbooks sent from Yugoslavia contained indoctrinating content and tried to strengthen the cult of personality of the country’s undisputed leader Josip Broz Tito.⁷⁷

The information from the study on labor migrants from Yugoslavia in Sweden, which also touches on the issue of their children’s education, says a lot about the attitude of the federal Yugoslav authorities in Belgrade regarding compliance with the provision on the official language in the SRH from the 1974 Constitution. In the table listing the mother tongues of students in Swedish schools originating from Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian is listed, but not Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian, let alone – in accordance with the Constitution of the SRH – the Croatian language.⁷⁸ This practice was also adopted by the Swedish authorities. Thus, in the magazine *Naše novine*, which the Swedish immigration authorities published for immigrants from Yugoslavia to help them integrate into society, it was clearly written that Serbo-Croatian would be taught in the native language classes. It is not far-fetched to say that the newspaper’s header in Swedish read “Invandrattidningen pa serbokroatiska”, i.e., “Immigrant Newspaper in Serbo-Croatian”.⁷⁹

It has already been mentioned that in the pages of HIZ magazine – *Hrvatska riječ* – there was a heated debate with the leadership of JS, and one of the points of contention was complementary schooling in Croatian. The constant complaints of the leadership and members of HIZ that the children of Croatian labor migrants were mostly denied the right to attend complementary schooling in the Croatian literary language are perhaps the best evidence for such a claim, since they came from Croats who were loyal to the Yugoslav regime. In early 1980, the startling fact emerged that only 5% of teachers of complementary schooling “have the courage” to teach in Croatian.⁸⁰ Benko described the situation in more detail in the introductory article in *Hrvatska riječ* of October 1981, noting that some teachers respect the nationality of children and adjust their teaching accordingly. However, he also pointed out: “But there are too many teachers who make mistakes when it comes to linguistic tolerance”. He believed that some do so out of fear of not being accused of being Croatian nationalists, others because they believe that students must adapt to the teacher, i.e. his/her nationality and language, and still others because they believe that there is no Croatian language. He described the behavior of such teachers towards children of Croatian nationality

77 *Odgoj i obrazovanje djece naših građana na privremenom radu u inozemstvu*, Zagreb 1984, 19, 73, 77, 87-88.

78 HDA, Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom IVS SRH, HR-HDA-1409, Box 105, Jugoslavenski radnici na privremenom radu u Švedskoj, Belgrade May, 1976, 23.

79 “Šta će dete izabrati u školi?” (special inset), *Naše novine* (Stockholm), January 23, 1976, 4.

80 “Pojeo vuk magare. I...?”, *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), March, 1980, 4.

as a criminal offense and a disregard for basic human and civil rights.⁸¹ In describing the reasons for the establishment of the Croatian society in the town of Ljungby, its president Stjepan Kruljac stated that the need to gather Croats arose “because of the pure discrimination against Croats and their children.” Then he specified this claim: “Croats were discriminated against in the existing Yugoslav associations (they felt they were not welcome, after all, they were clearly told that), while Croatian children were discriminated against with regard to their mother tongue. They simply could not learn their mother tongue.”⁸² Some Croatian societies, which were members of the HIZ, were involved in the introduction of complementary schooling in Croatian in elementary school, including in the municipality of Västerås. The society “Croatia” from Helsingborg organized lessons in Croatian language in their own premises.⁸³

In a detailed text in *Hrvatska riječ*, literate Ivan Budak, secretary of the HIZ, placed the problem of implementing complementary schooling in the native language in a broader context, comparing language practice and the situation in Yugoslavia and in Sweden. At the beginning, he reminded that according to the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, every citizen has the right to use his or her own language. He then expressed the view that Croato-Serbian or Serbo-Croatian, apart from the name, does not really exist in Yugoslavia because the citizens do not use it. He wrote that this language was an “artificial creation” used neither by Serbs nor Croats in Yugoslavia, but that the Serbian and Croatian languages were used. He drew parallels between the situation in Yugoslavia and Sweden, claiming that in Yugoslavia the name used to refer to the language is less important because people speak Croatian or Serbian. Abroad, especially in Sweden, the number of Croatian and Serbian speakers is much smaller, which means that Croats, as well as Serbs in Sweden, and especially their children, are much more likely to adopt Croato-Serbian or Serbo-Croatian through complementary schooling, which Budak calls the “de-nationalization” of Croats and Serbs. He noted that the term “Serbo-Croats speaking the Yugoslav language” is increasingly used in Swedish state institutions, partly due to the situation described. He concluded that Croatian and Serbian children are forced to learn a hybrid, artificial language at school that their parents do not use. He ended ironically by asking whether these children will need a dictionary when communicating with their grandparents in Yugoslavia.⁸⁴

According to data from 1975, the number of registered children of labor migrants from Yugoslavia in Sweden was about 5,000, about 1,800 of them attended complementary schooling in which there were 105 teachers, and only 20 of them were from SRH.⁸⁵ In the document dealing with the education of the children of labor migrants

81 Mirko Benko, “Uvodnik”, October, 1981, 1.

82 Marijan Devčić, “Danas razgovaramo”, *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), June 1981, 9.

83 “Na početku školske godine”, *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), September, 1980, 10; Marijan Devčić, “Sve za jezik”, *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), October, 1980, 3.

84 Ivan Budak, “O jeziku rode da ti (opet pojem)...”, *Hrvatska riječ* (Solna), December, 1980, 6.

85 HDA, Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom IVS SRH, HR-HDA-1409, Box 103, Informacija o školovanju djece naših radnika na privremenom radu u inozemstvu, Zagreb February 7, 1975, 4.

in Sweden, it was noted that the curriculum is designed for teaching linguistically homogeneous classes, but that in practice this is usually not the case, i.e., there are children of different nationalities in the classes. Therefore, it was pointed out that the teacher has the enormous responsibility to adapt the teaching to the national composition of the students in the class. It is clearly stated that "It is important that linguistic tolerance is fully and consistently respected in the educational process, in which the role of the teacher is very important and socially responsible, especially in classes with a diverse composition according to republican, national and linguistic affiliation."⁸⁶ As indicated in some of the previous parts of this paper, substantial number of teachers have abused their broad powers in setting up complementary schooling, that is, in choosing the language for instruction.

Unlike, for example, FGR authorities, who accepted the Yugoslav position that only teachers approved by Yugoslavia could teach labor migrant children in complementary schooling, Sweden preferred teachers to be unrelated to the Yugoslav regime. Since the education in Sweden is in charge of the municipalities, the Swedish authorities treated this matter as an internal issue, and not something that needed to be resolved bilaterally between Sweden and Yugoslavia. Such a situation allowed members of the DMG, and subsequently the HS, especially when they had some influence in their local communities, to nominate complementary schooling teachers.⁸⁷ Over time, municipal authorities most often accepted such proposals, but there were also examples, like, during a certain period in Malmö, that senior local officials cooperated very closely with the Yugoslav consul, even to the extent of making internal documents available to him.⁸⁸ A first complementary schooling independent from the Yugoslav regime was organized in Olofström. Josip Mataija, deputy councilor in the municipal assembly and union representative in the Volvo factory, played an important role in introducing the model. Wanting to further emphasize its democratic orientation, HS opined that Croatian classes should be open also to Serb children from the SRH, explaining that apart from a few hundred words related to the church liturgy, there is no difference between the language of Croats and Serbs in the SRH.⁸⁹

The existence of regime-independent complementary schooling conducted in Croatian was a thorn in the side of the Yugoslav communist regime, so on November 13, 1975, the Yugoslav-Swedish commission for teaching issues for "Yugoslav" children (and not children from Yugoslavia), as it was called, visited the school in Olofström

⁸⁶ Ibid, 8.

⁸⁷ Interview with B.S.

"The Swedes still select teachers for the complementary schooling themselves from among the Yugoslavs already in this country, often without consulting our DKP [diplomatic-consular representation] or the relevant authorities in Yugoslavia, and do not accept the recruitment of teachers from our country." HDA, Savjet za odnose s inozemstvom IVS SRH, HR-HDA-1409, Box 105, Jugoslavenski radnici na privremenom radu u Švedskoj, Belgrade May, 1976, 24.

⁸⁸ Interview with B.S.

⁸⁹ Josip Mataija, "Prvi s nastavom hrvatskog", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February, 1980, 15-16.

where such classes existed. The Yugoslav members of the commission were officials of educational and cultural institutions from Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, and Belgrade, as well as the Swedish members, who were employees of the Supreme Board of Education. Representatives of the Olofström school and the municipality were present at the meeting, as was the Yugoslav Consul in Malmö, Ivo Veočić. The Yugoslav representatives resented the fact that representatives of the DMG, led by Mataija, were also invited. The Yugoslav representatives also expressed their dissatisfaction that the local Swedish authorities allowed Croatian and Serbian children to be placed in separate classes (39 students took part in the complementary schooling in Croatian), as there was no reason for this, since they learn the “same” language. Mataija protested vigorously against such a claim, referring to the SRH Constitution and the scientific work of the distinguished Croatian linguist Tomislav Ladan, who wrote about the differences between the Croatian and Serbian languages. In addition, Mataija referred to the principles of freedom and democracy on which Swedish society is based. According to the description of the events in the Croatian émigré magazine *Nova Hrvatska*, an unpleasant situation arose for the Yugoslav guests, but also for the Swedish hosts, which was interrupted by an invitation to lunch. According to the same source, the next day the Yugoslav representatives refused to have lunch in the same school, claiming that they were “afraid of being killed by Croatian extremists.”⁹⁰ In the absence of valid counter-arguments to Mataija’s presentation, they resorted to the frequently used, but already unconvincing for the Swedes accusation against HS.

The positioning of the Swedish authorities and the activities of the HS met with strong Yugoslav disapproval since, besides the indoctrination aspect, it viewed complementary schooling also as an opening to keep an eye on its citizens. The Yugoslav intelligence services assessed this project of HS as “one of the more extreme forms of propaganda-subversive activity” against Yugoslavia. They also duly registered that various Swedish media reported on the need to organize independent Croatian complementary schooling, that Minister of Education Tillander presented it on a radio show on Radio Malmö, and that the writer and liberal politician Küng said that the schooling system of a democratic country should not tolerate activities which serve to maintain a dictatorship.⁹¹ JS president Smiljanić, in the aforementioned conversation with the delegation of the Yugoslav Assembly in 1987, pointed out that HS declares itself as a non-political organization active in the field of culture and sports, “but its separatist-chauvinist character is obvious and manifests itself in various ways, such as a campaign to separate teaching in Croatian from the currently officially established and defined teaching in the native Serbo-Croatian or Croato-Serbian languages.”⁹²

90 Dopisnik, “Prisjeo ručak jugoslavenskim članovima školske komisije u Švedskoj”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 4, 1976, 17-18.

91 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 49; HR-HDA-1561, Aktivnost hrvatske neprijateljske emigracije u Švedskoj (1984. – 1987.), 40.

92 HDA, RKIP SRH, HR-HDA-2058, Box 299, Dopis predsjednika Skupštine SFRJ Ive Vrandečića Izvršnom vijeću Sabora SRH, Belgrade April 27, 1987, 2.

Defense of HS members from the repression of the Yugoslav communist regime

Yugoslavia tried in many ways to control Croatian labor migrants to Sweden and to prevent their contact with Croatian émigrés. In addition to attempts to include Croats in JS and influence Croatian children through teachers sent from Yugoslavia, Yugoslav diplomats and intelligence services used often even more direct oppressive methods. Many members of the HS experienced various forms of rough treatment during their vacations in Yugoslavia, and in some cases, even their relatives living in Yugoslavia were ill treated.⁹³ In many instances HS members opposed this and called on the Swedish society to show its solidarity and they pleaded for help with Swedish politicians. As expected, the Yugoslav intelligence service diligently monitored all these cases, usually assessing that the Swedish authorities had “fallen for” the anti-Yugoslav propaganda and the lies of the “Croatian hostile emigration”.⁹⁴

One of the most notorious cases of repression concerned Swedish citizen Tonči Percan, a Croatian language teacher and contributor to the provincial radio for southern Sweden. The Yugoslav Consul in Malmö, Jozo Bubaš, tried recruiting him as an informant and on several occasions making death threats to Percan and his parents. Percan recorded one of these conversations and played it at a press conference. The case was extensively reported in the Swedish media, and it was also discussed in the Swedish parliament.⁹⁵

Two well-known TV journalists – Frank Hirschfeldt and Kåre Nyblom – first responded to allegations of the Yugoslav side in an article in the highest-circulation afternoon newspaper, *Expressen*, on October 24, 1983. The row culminated in the media when, after reactions from Belgrade, program directors of both then existing two (public) TV channels – Olle Berglund and Oloph Hansson – published an extensive joint article in the largest morning newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* on November 14. They relaid information, published by several leading German media, about official terror and murders committed by Yugoslav intelligence services and accused the Yugoslav embassy and the JS of trying to prevent the employment of Percan as a reporter by spreading false rumors.⁹⁶

93 Observator. “Slobodne ruke udbašima”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), July-October, 1981, 21-22.

In mid-January 1973, a dozen immigrants from Yugoslavia, mostly Croats, were arrested in Gothenburg on charges of espionage. Other arrests followed very quickly, and one of the arrested was found at the airport, armed and with a ticket to Belgrade. In the end, two people from this group of arrestees, Adolf Logarušić and Marko Babić, were sentenced to six and eight months in prison for spying on Croatian émigrés. “Švedska zatvara jugoslavenske agente”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 2, 1973, 7; “Švedski oprez”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 3, 1973, 6; I.K. “Göteborg: udbaši, naivnost, izgredi”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 5, 1973, 15.

The Yugoslav consul in Stockholm, Mihajko Dika, fled to Yugoslavia in 1976 after it was discovered that he had tried to recruit the Croatian émigré Branko Glavak as an informant. “Magnetofon otkrio konzula-udbaša”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 19, 1976, 10.

94 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 84-85.

95 “Otkrio policiji ucjenu Udbe”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), September-December, 1980, 21; HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 81.

96 Interview with B.S.

The Peraić family of Olofström, Swedish citizens as well as Percan, was among those interrogated and intimidated with death threats by the Yugoslav police during their visit to Yugoslavia, regarding the activities of their son Slavko. To pressure his sister Maria, they showed her blueprints of their family home in Olofström, a photo of the room where her brother slept, the list of his circle of friends and a newspaper to which he subscribed, etc.⁹⁷

The most dramatic in a series of incidents of this kind occurred in the mid-1980s when Yugoslav authorities detained HS member Ivan Dragičević during a 1984 vacation in Yugoslavia. After year-long tensions, Dragičević took in early October 1985 a dramatic step – he went to the Swedish embassy in Belgrade and refused to leave it. The case aroused great media interest and became a top issue in Swedish-Yugoslav relations, as evidenced by two meetings of foreign ministers related to the case. Also, Prime Minister Palme sent his envoy to Belgrade for negotiations. During his visit to Olofström, Palme spoke with representatives of the Dragičević Aid Committee, and the Swedish Metalworker's Union, which had expressed its support for Dragičević and was influential within the SDP. Parliamentarians from the four most important parties – Ulla Tillander (center), Ralph Lindström (SDP), Gunnel Ljiljegren (conservatives), and Kenth Skärvik (liberals) joined the Committee and were followed by the union official Pentti Suua and a well-known priest, Ingemar Simonsson. To facilitate Dragičević's return to Sweden, he was granted Swedish citizenship in an unusually quick sequence. The Yugoslav Foreign Ministry assessed the whole event as a violation of Swedish-Yugoslav relations and Sweden's interference in internal Yugoslav affairs.⁹⁸

Croatian Federation and the defense of human rights in Croatia

The foremost task of the HS was to organize and protect the Croatian minority in Sweden and help it to fit into the Swedish way of life and values. Within this framework, however, it has also frequently demanded that human rights be respected even in Yugoslavia and that the persecution of dissidents, especially frequent in Croatia, be stopped. It was a form of support for the freedom struggle in Croatia. Since the mid-1970s, the respect of human rights had become one of the main topics in international politics, and a great many Croats hoped that the weakening of the regime's repression, democratization, and liberalization of social and then political life would lead to a peaceful disintegration of Yugoslavia as it was believed to be able to survive only as a dictatorship. By focusing on respect for human rights in Yugoslavia, Croats could gain the support even of that Swedish public figured who did not question the existence of the Yugoslav state *per se*, but could not tolerate the totalitarian character of the regime.⁹⁹

97 "Prijetnje jednoj obitelji", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), July-October, 1981, 5-6.

98 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Aktivnost hrvatske neprijateljske emigracije u Švedskoj (1984. – 1987.), 71-80.

99 Interview with B.S.

In many cases, well-known Swedish politicians and intellectuals protested against the treatment of political prisoners in Croatia (various forms of physical and psychological abuse, extortion of “confessions” for criminal offenses, etc.) and the existence of the so-called verbal offense. A petition protesting the abhorrent torture of a group of falsely accused Croatian political prisoners in 1979 was signed by politicians Ralf Lindström (SDP), Rune Rydén (conservatives), Bertil Fiskesjö (Center Party – who soon became the chairman of the constitutional committee in parliament), and liberals Karin Ahrlund, Olle Wästberg and Per Gahrton. Also, on the list were former rectors of the country’s two oldest universities – Uppsala and Lund – Torgny Segerstedt and Sven Johansson, one of the leading philosophers, Ingemar Hedenius, and bishop Olle Nivenius. It was also signed by famous writers – Svante Foerster, Max Lundgren, Sandro Key-Aberg, Bo Setterlind and Birgitta Trotzig, as well as writers and journalists Fritiof Haglund and Per Wästberg (shortly afterward elected president of the International PEN). Surprising for some, among the signatories was also the far-left author Arthur Lundkvist, then probably the most influential academic at the Nobel Prize Committee, who received the Lenin Prize, and three weeks before the petition was signed, was awarded the Yugoslav international literary prize.¹⁰⁰ Such events thoroughly dented Yugoslavia’s reputation in the world and made a hole in its democratic and socialist self-image and the role of a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. For Croatian émigrés, it just confirmed their claim that Yugoslavia, for all its allure outside the Soviet bloc, was a cruel dictatorship that persecutes members of non-Serb peoples, especially Croats.¹⁰¹

One of the major actions of anti-Yugoslav Croats in Sweden was a large protest against Yugoslav president Tito’s visit to Stockholm in early April 1976, just six months after Yugoslav agents killed Stipe Mikulić, president of “Veľebit” society in Gothenburg. A few days before the Yugoslav visit the influential newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* published Salaj’s article entitled “No, Tito is not the father of the homeland”, which caused a diplomatic incident and degrading of the visit to a slightly lower protocol level than planned.¹⁰²

A large-scale protest by Croats and Albanians was held in Stockholm on May 30, 1981, after a trial of prominent Croatian dissidents – Vlado Gotovac, Franjo Tuđman, and Marko Veselica – and the bloody suppression of Albanian protests in Kosovo. The demonstration started in front of the parliament building and marched through the city center to the Yugoslav embassy, where Salaj gave a speech in Swedish. Protesters carried slogans calling for an end to the export of Swedish weapons to Yugoslavia, a

100 “Poznati Švedani u obranu ljudskih prava”, *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), January-February, 1980, 3-4.

101 Rozijan has done most of the work in lobbying and collecting signatures of prominent Swedes. Interview with B.S.

102 Interview with B.S.

The article was published in Croatian translation in the magazine *Nova Hrvatska*. “Nikakav otac domovine!”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 7, 1976, 11.

See also the article: “Tito izišao poražen”, *Nova Hrvatska* (London), No 8, 1976, 7-9, 12.

tourist boycott, the release of political prisoners, and the right to self-determination of the Croats and Albanians.¹⁰³ In his speech, Salaj called on the Swedish authorities to protest in Belgrade against obvious violations of the Helsinki Final Act and appealed to the SDP to stop perceiving the Yugoslav communists as socialists or social democrats.¹⁰⁴ A year later (1982) Yugoslav intelligence reported that a group of Croats took part in the traditional SDP May 1 demonstration.¹⁰⁵

After the dissident Marko Veselica was harshly sentenced to eleven years in prison (mainly for an extensive interview with the German magazine *Der Spiegel*), a special committee was set up to collect signatures for his release, inform the Swedish public about the case, and lobby the Swedish government to intercede for his release.¹⁰⁶ The Yugoslav intelligence services were particularly interested in this action. Their documents confirm some of the information from *Hrvatski glasnik*, i.e. that some Swedish politicians and journalists, such as Vincent Rundqvist from Karlskrona, supported the committee. It was also mentioned that the petition was signed even by Swedish citizens and that some Swedish media covered the action (among them the newspaper *Kvälls-posten*). According to the same source, 5,850 signatures were collected.¹⁰⁷

Criticism of HS of conditions in the homeland, as well as those of numerous organizations of Croatian émigrés, came to fruition in the early 1990s when the communist regime in Yugoslavia began collapsing. The West was initially reluctant to recognize Croatia's right to secede, although it was guaranteed by the Yugoslav constitution. It took a tremendous effort to fend off the brunt of the aggression on Croatia's territory but also a lot of lobbying in the West to recognize the will of the Croatian people for an independent state as expressed in a democratic referendum. Croats around the world were largely responsible for this turnaround. In these critical moments, the previously established ties with foreign politicians and intellectuals, as well as the affirmation of Croatian communities in Western countries, proved to be especially useful for the young Croatian state. This has been achieved in Sweden largely thanks to HS.

103 "Odlučna osuda jugo-nasilja", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), May-June, 1981, 1-6.

104 Branko Salaj, "Govor na demonstraciji protiv političkog terora u Jugoslaviji", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), May-June, 1981, 7-9.

105 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 54.

106 "Zaprepastila nas je kazna", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), July-October, 1981, 23-24; "Spasimo Marka Veselicu", *Hrvatski glasnik* (Lund), October-December, 1981, 20.

107 HDA, SDS RSUP SRH, HR-HDA-1561, Organizacije neprijateljske hrvatske emigracije u Švedskoj, 52-53.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that HS, founded in 1978, was the most important organization of Croatian immigrants in Sweden, open both to labor migrants and political refugees. It played a key role in assembling Croats who wanted to preserve Croatian national identity through cultural, sports, and religious activities. The leadership of the HS and most of its members were anti-communist and anti-Yugoslav and supported the idea of the creation of an independent and democratic Croatian state. Although declaring itself a nonpolitical body, the HS took occasionally part in political events to advocate respect for human rights in communist Yugoslavia. Such a course of action was based on the belief that Yugoslavia could be maintained only as a dictatorship, and that the freedom of speech, liberalization, and democratization would lead to its disintegration.

Acting as an organization of Croatian immigrants, HS strove primarily to achieve its best possible integration into Swedish society. Only a limited number of Croats joined JS, promoted by communist Yugoslavia among its citizens in Sweden. JS tried in various ways to prevent or diminish the influence of democratic ideas and values of Swedish society on its members, differing in this sense from HS as well. The HS successfully refuted allegations by the Yugoslav communist regime that all or the vast majority of anti-Yugoslav Croats were supporters of fascism and violence-prone extremism.

The paper illustrates also how the HS successfully defended its members from various forms of repression by the Yugoslav regime, either in Sweden or during their holidays in Yugoslavia. The HS was therefore under constant attack by the Yugoslav intelligence and diplomatic personal. Any move made by the Swedish authorities or reports in Swedish media that did not go hand in hand with Yugoslav interests were assessed as anti-Yugoslav actions. They were frequently interpreted as a sign of an alleged Swedish sympathy for the proponents of Croatian independence and, more broadly, as a part of the alleged general anti-communist and anti-Yugoslav attitude of the West and "reactionary elements" in Sweden.

The paper refutes such an explanation, claiming that Yugoslav communists failed to understand the democratic nature of the Swedish state and society and the freedom of expressing a free and independent opinion, which in important matters did not exist in Yugoslavia. HS made extensive use of the opportunity to employ the democratic standards of Swedish society in defense of its members from the control exercised by the Yugoslav regime. It also asked for solidarity with the struggle of compatriots in their homeland for fundamental democratic rights and freedoms.

SAŽETAK

Hrvatski savez u Švedskoj 1980-ih – priča o nevjerojatnom uspjehu

U radu se opisuju neki od načina djelovanja od konca 1970-ih godina najveće organizacije hrvatskih useljenika u Švedskoj – Saveza hrvatskih kulturnih, sportskih i vjerskih društava u Švedskoj (Hrvatskog saveza – HS). Sljednik spomenute organizacije postoji i danas te djeluje pod imenom Savez hrvatskih društava Švedska (*Kroatiska Riksförbundet Sverige*), no ovaj članak tematizira razdoblje do raspada komunističke Jugoslavije. Konkretnije, analiziraju se razlozi koji su doveli do osnivanja HS-a te njegovi napori u zastupanju svojih članova i njihovih interesa pred švedskim institucijama neovisno od države iz koje su emigrirali, tj. Jugoslavije. Nadalje, sukobi HS-a s Jugoslovensko-švedskom zajednicom (skraćeno Jugoslavenskim savezom – JS), paradržavnom organizacijom jugoslavenskog komunističkog režima, kakve je potonji osnovao diljem sjeverne i zapadne Europe s ciljem zadržavanja različitih oblika kontrole i utjecaja nad jugoslavenskim građanima koji su otišli na tzv. privremeni rad. Zatim, nastojanje za integracijom hrvatskih useljenika u švedsko društvo, što se očitovalo u, primjerice, poticanju informiranja o švedskom društvu i izbornom sustavu te sudjelovanja hrvatskih doseljenika na lokalnim izborima. Članak se dotiče i manifestacija kojima je bio cilj prezentiranje hrvatske kulturne tradicije, među kojima se posebno isticala Smotra hrvatske kulture. Važno polje djelovanja HS-a bila je i borba za pravo korištenja hrvatskoga književnog jezika i organiziranja dopunske nastave za hrvatsku djecu neovisno od Jugoslavije. Također, rad analizira načine obrane članova HS-a od represije jugoslavenskoga komunističkog režima, bilo u Švedskoj, bilo u Jugoslaviji, ali i borbe HS-a za poštivanje ljudskih prava u Hrvatskoj. Kada je riječ o potonjem, u prvom redu radilo se o različitim oblicima protesta protiv političkih progona. Djelovanje HS-a stavljeno je i u kontekst djelovanja hrvatske političke emigracije u razdoblju 1945-1990. i njene borbe za samostalnu i demokratsku hrvatsku državu.

Rad je u prvome redu napisan na temelju članaka iz časopisa kojega je izdavao HS – *Hrvatskog glasnika* (*Kroatisk invandrantidning*), zatim dva elaborata jugoslavenskog Saveznog sekretarijata za unutrašnje poslove o hrvatskoj političkoj emigraciji u Švedskoj, a koji su nastali u drugoj polovici 1980-ih te izabranih dokumenata o Hrvatima u Švedskoj koji su nastali radom Socijalističkog saveza radnog naroda Hrvatske, potom Savjeta za odnose s inozemstvom Izvršnog vijeća Sabora Socijalističke Republike Hrvatske (SRH) i Republičkog komiteta za odnose s inozemstvom SRH. Uz spomenuto, autor je koristio podatke do kojih je došao primjenom metoda oralne historije, budući da je osobno intervjuirao vodeću osobu HS-a Branka Salaja te putem elektroničke pošte još dva istaknuta aktivista – Ivu Biloglava i Matu Balića. U nešto manjoj mjeri korišteni su i časopisi hrvatske političke emigracije *Nova Hrvatska* i *Poruka slobodne Hrvatske*, kao i *Hrvatska riječ*, glasilo onih Hrvata u Švedskoj koji su bili lojalni jugoslavenskom komunističkom režimu. Autor je komparativnom analizom nastojao rekonstruirati i kritički ocijeniti u prethodnom odlomku spomenute procese i događaje te ih kontekstualizirati, dijelom uz pomoć historiografske i publicističke literature. U radu se prezentira zaključak, a kojemu u prilogu idu svi konzultirani izvori, da je HS bio najznačajnija, najsnažnija i najbrojnija organizacija politički i/ili društveno aktivnih hrvatskih useljenika u Švedskoj. HS je odigrao ključnu ulogu u okupljanju Hrvata u toj skandinavskoj zemlji te očuvanja hrvatskog nacionalnog identiteta kroz kulturni i športski rad te podršku vjerskom okupljanju oko domovinskih svećenika, ali je dao i doprinos u borbi za poštivanje ljudskih i nacionalnih prava u komunističkoj Jugoslaviji. Ugled i utjecaj koji su HS-ovi članovi stekli u švedskom političkom životu i javnoj sferi, bazirajući svoje djelovanje na švedskim normama političkog i društvenog djelovanja, bili su od velike koristi prilikom lobiranja za priznanje samostalne i demokratske Republike Hrvatske početkom 1990-ih godina.

Ključne riječi: hrvatski politički emigranti, radni migranti, Švedska, Hrvatski savez, komunistička Jugoslavija, integracija