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## ACTIVITIES OF THE CROATIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT AT THE CONGRESSES OF THE WORLD ANTI-COMMUNIST LEAGUE FROM 1970 TO 1975

Ivan TEPEŠ\*

Based on relevant literature, émigré press and unprocessed archival material, this paper analyses the hitherto unexplored activities of the Croatian Liberation Movement (CLM) at the congresses of the World Anti-Communist League (WACL) from its membership in 1970 to the recognition of Croatia as a member nation in 1975. CLM focused its activities on familiarizing the international public with the Croatian question and its solution in the form of an independent Croatian state outside the Yugoslav framework, discrediting Yugoslavia, its communist system and dictatorship, and the policy of non-alignment. The key allies of the CLM were Ukrainian emigrants from the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), through which they entered the WACL. The problem for the CLM was the Ustasha heritage, which then became a means of discrediting the WACL. The aim of this paper is to contribute to the research of the Cold War activities of Croatian political emigration (CPE) in international anti-communist organizations.

**Keywords:** Anti-communism; Cold War; World Anti-Communist League; Croatian political emigration; Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations; Croatian Liberation Movement

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\* Ivan Tepeš, PhD, Institute for Migration Research, Zagreb, Croatia; [ivan.tepes@imin.hr](mailto:ivan.tepes@imin.hr)

## Introduction

The activities of Croatian political emigration (CPE) in international anti-communist organizations during the Cold War have not been sufficiently researched. Some attention was paid to the activities of Croatian representatives in the organizations of emigrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) sponsored by the American National Committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee (NCFE/FEC)<sup>1</sup> and in the ABN.<sup>2</sup> Croatian authors have shown no interest in more detailed research into CPE activities at WACL. HOP's work in WACL is briefly mentioned chronologically in only one book by Croatian authors,<sup>3</sup> while most of the others, who have written about the CLM, do not mention it at all.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, foreign authors, who dealt with the WACL, mentioned Croatian representatives, but only secondarily, as a means of discrediting the WACL, linking it to Nazism and violence, citing the Ustasha legacy and the CPE's violent armed actions in the early 1970s.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, this paper presents and analyses in more detail for the first time the CLM's activities in WACL, through activities at congresses from the admission of CLM to WACL in 1970 to the recognition of Croatia's status as a member nation in 1975.

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<sup>1</sup> Ivan Tepeš, *Hrvatska politička emigracija* (Zagreb: AGM d.o.o., 2021); Ivan Tepeš, "Odnos Vladka Mačeka prema hrvatskom pitanju i Jugoslaviji kroz djelovanje u organizacijama emigranata srednje i istočne Europe od 1947. do 1964. godine," in *Zbornik radova međunarodne znanstveno-stručne konferencije "Migracije i identitet: Kultura, ekonomija, država,"* ed. Mari-na Perić-Kaselj (Zagreb: Institut za migracije i narodnosti, 2020), 869–82.

<sup>2</sup> Ivan Tepeš, "Croats in Emigrant Organizations from Central and Eastern Europe during the First Half of the Cold War: International Peasant Union and Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations," *The Exile History Review* 3 (2024), 11-30.

<sup>3</sup> Tomislav Krolo, *Hrvatski politički emigrant 1941.-1991.* (Zagreb: Author' Edition, 2017), 175-176.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Čizmić, Marin Sopta, Vlado Šakić, *Iseljena Hrvatska* (Zagreb: Golden marketing-Tehnička knjiga, 2005), 369-378; Bože Vukušić, *Tajni rat UDBE protiv hrvatskoga iseljeništa* (Zagreb: Klub hrvatskih povratnika iz iseljeništa, 2021), 15-21; Wolfy Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i Hrvatska politička emigracija* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2018), 13-31.

<sup>5</sup> Scott Anderson, Jon Lee Anderson, *Inside the League: The Shocking Expose of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League* (New York: Dodd, Mead&Company, 1986), 5-6, 9-13, 26-28, 38-39, 41-43, 86, 96, 99; Penny Lernoux, *Cry of the people* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 146; Kyle Burke, *Revolutionaries for the Right: Anticommunism Internationalism and Paramilitary Warfare in the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 62, 76-77, 158; Russ Belant, *Old Nazis, the New Right, and the Republican Party* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991), 12-15, 74; Julio Lesandro Canon Voirin, "La Confederación Interamericana de Defensa del Continente (CIDC)," *Rubrica Contemporanea* 6(2017) no. 12: 84.

The reconstruction of CLM's activities at WACL congresses is necessary to demonstrate the CPE's method of action in the internationalization of the Croatian question by political means. Especially since armed actions aroused greater interest, both among the public at the time and among contemporary researchers, especially those outside Croatia, which may lead to the conclusion that the CPE's work on the internationalization of the Croatian issue was exclusively through armed means.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the paper analyses the CLM's views that it expressed at the WACL congresses on resolving the issue of Croatia's position and the topics it raised, finding international allies in this, but also the difficulties that accompanied them. CLM's positions on current international issues, arguments for discrediting Yugoslavia's international position, but also the monitoring of such activities by the Yugoslav State Security Service (YSSS) and the rest of the CPE are also analysed.

In addition to the relevant literature, CLM's official gazettes *Croatia* and *the Independent State of Croatia* and ABN's the official gazette *ABN Correspondence*, which was also one of the three international newspapers in charge of promoting WACL's activities, were mostly used in the paper.<sup>7</sup> Data from the archival fund of the State Security Service of the Socialist Republic of Croatia, which is located in the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb, were also used. In this fund, in the files of emigrants who participated in WACL's activities,<sup>8</sup> as well as in the study of the YSSS on the CLM,<sup>9</sup> very little information can

<sup>6</sup> Mate Nikola Tokić, *Diaspora Politics and Transnational Terrorism: An Historical Case Study* (Florence: European University Institute, 2009); Mate Nikola Tokić, *Croatian Radical Separatism and Diaspora Terrorism During the Cold War* (West Lafayette, Indiana, USA: Purdue University Press, 2020); Srđan Cvetković, "Terorizam i jugoslovenska politička emigracija," *Istorija 20. veka – Časopis Instituta za savremenu istoriju* 32(2014), No. 2: 171-197; Kristina Kalfić, "'The bomb is set...': responses to Croatian political activism in Australia, 1947-1989" (Doctoral thesis, Wollongong: University of Wollongong, 2017); Alexander Mitchell Lee, "They Seem Like a Good Bunch': Liberal Party Support for Violent Croatian Nationalism in Australia 1949-1972" (Doctoral thesis, Canberra: Australian National University, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Pierre Abramovici, "The World Anti-Communist League: Origins, Structures and Activities," In: *Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities, and Networks*, Ed. Luc Van Dongen, Stephanie Roulin and Giles Scott-Smith (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 121.

<sup>8</sup> In Ante Bonifačić's dossier, out of 94 pages, WACL is mentioned as a secondary topic only on two pages. (HR-HDA-1561-SDS RSUP SRH, file no. 127647, Ante-Anton Bonifačić, 34, 54); In Stjepan Hefer's dossier, out of 308 pages of the dossier, WACL is also mentioned as a secondary topic on only two pages (HR-HDA-1561-SDS RSUP SRH, file no. 301034, Stjepan Hefer, 279, 281); In the file of Srećko Pšeničnik, Permanent Representative of the CLM to WACL, out of 220 pages, WACL is mentioned as a secondary topic on only 6 pages (HR-HDA-1561-SDS RSUP SRH, file no. 211088-Srećko-Felix Pšeničnik, 75, 80, 82, 93, 95, 115).

<sup>9</sup> HR-HDA-1561-SDS RSUP SRH, 4.1/212, "Hrvatski oslobodilački pokret," Beograd, November 1, 1983, 10-11.

be found about their activities in the WACL, which is very interesting if we compare it with the mass of information that the YSSS recorded about the activities of members of the Croatian Peasant Party (CPP) in international emigrant organizations.<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the files also included data obtained from Yugoslav diplomatic and consular missions, as well as data and analytical materials from the émigré press.

The focus of the time frame of the paper refers to the period from 1970 to 1975, but given the insufficient coverage so far, attention has been paid to the hitherto unknown or less known facts from the CLM's activities in the preparatory period of the establishment of WACL. Therefore, the paper, except for the introductory part, is divided into three chapters. The first chapter refers to the period in which the CLM left its mark in the organizations that participated in the WACL creation process from the end of the 1950s to the 1970s, as well as the first years of its operation after its establishment. The second chapter refers to the period of CLM's participation in the first three congresses after acquiring full status in 1970. The third includes the congresses in Washington in 1974 and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1975, at which it was decided to grant the status of Croatia a full WACL member nation.

The CLM was founded in 1956 by the former head of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC), Ante Pavelić, who, before his death, in December 1959, appointed Stjepan Hefer as his successor as president of the CLM. With the death of Hefer in July 1973, Ivan Asančaić took over the leadership for two years as acting president. After the internal organizational elections, in December 1975, Dr. Antun Bonifačić became president, who from April 1969 also held the position of Prime Minister of the Croatian State Government in exile.<sup>11</sup>

Along with organizing within the CPE and CLM, there was also the linking of CEE emigrants on the international level based on anti-communism. By connecting with each other, the emigrants tried to gain allies with the aim of strengthening a common position in Western democratic countries, primarily the United States, but also strengthening their own position, expecting support for taking power in their countries after the fall of communism. CPE used international organizations to internationalize the issue of Croatia's position in the Yugoslavia and to express their views on its solution. From 1947 onwards, the emigrants gathered around the CPP, and its president, Vladko

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<sup>10</sup> Tepeš, *Hrvatska politička emigracija-HSS*, 183-238.

<sup>11</sup> "Imenovanje predsjednika Hrv. Državne Vlade," *Hrvatska* (April 30, 1969), 1; "Izbor predsjednika Hrvatskog oslobodilačkog pokreta," *Hrvatska*, November 1975, 3; "Velebna svečanost u čast predsjednika H.O.P-a," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, January-February 1976, 1.

Maček, found their international environment in the International Peasant Union (IPU) and emigrant organizations sponsored by the NOSE/OSE, which was supported by the United States and its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In these organizations, the CPP was more inclined to advocate a solution to the Croatian question within the Yugoslav state framework. On the other hand, emigrants close to the former Ustasha movement advocated the position of an independent Croatian state, outside of any Yugoslavia. They found their international allies from the end of the 1940s in the ABN, through which they opened the doors of the WACL in the late 1960s.<sup>12</sup>

The ABN was founded in November 1943 on the territory of Ukraine, and its post-war activities were reactivated in 1946 at a meeting in Munich.<sup>13</sup> Jaroslav Stetsko<sup>14</sup> became ABN's president at that time, and a Croatian representative was also present at the meeting. From August 1949 Croats have their own permanent representative in the ABN. Of the Croatian organizations in the early 1950s, the Croatian National Committee of Branimir Jelić and the Croatian National Resistance of Vjekoslav Luburić were alternately included in the ABN, and since its establishment in 1956, the only Croatian organization included in the ABN was the CLM.<sup>15</sup> The ABN advocated the overthrow of communism in the CEE, and advocated the right of peoples to self-determination and the establishment of their own states, which also meant the dismantling of all the then multinational state formations, such as the USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, which coincided with the demands of the CLM. Through the ABN, Croats have achieved excellent cooperation with the Ukrainian emigration, which was among the largest, with organizations all over the world.<sup>16</sup>

The problem for the CPE, unlike others from the CEE, was the Yugoslav international position after 1948 and the conflict between Josip Broz Tito and the Soviet leader Josef Stalin. Since then, Yugoslavia has moved closer to the West with the wholehearted help of the United States, whose goal was to

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<sup>12</sup> Tepeš, "Croats in Emigrant Organizations from Central and Eastern Europe during the First Half of the Cold War: International Peasant Union and Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations," 11-30.

<sup>13</sup> Grygoriy Riy, "Reasons for the Creation of the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN): Eastern European and Ukrainian Dimensions," *Almanac of Ukrainian Studies* 19 (2021): 149-57.

<sup>14</sup> Stetsko was the Prime Minister of Ukraine for a short time, at the beginning of July 1941.

<sup>15</sup> Tepeš, "Croats in Emigrant Organizations from Central and Eastern Europe during the First Half of the Cold War: International Peasant Union and Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations," 21.

<sup>16</sup> "Hrvatski oslobodilački pokret," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, April-May 1974, 1

keep Tito afloat and preserve the integrity of Yugoslavia.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Western countries, and primarily the United States, had another, unofficial foreign policy, within which those emigrants who advocated the overthrow of Tito and Yugoslavia also found their place.<sup>18</sup> These emigrants also found their place in American domestic political combinations as a voter base. This was especially evident during President Nixon's mandate with the establishment of the National Republican Heritage Groups Council, which brought together emigrants associated with the WACL, including Croats associated with the Ustasha movement,<sup>19</sup> important for winning ethnic votes in five key states.<sup>20</sup> Based on the above facts, CPE were able to work very actively, but not without problems, in international organizations.

At the same time, during the 1960s and 1970s, Yugoslavia strengthened its international position by participating in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which was a particular target of the foreign policy activities of the CPE.<sup>21</sup>

### **CLM's activities in the period from the beginning of preparations for the establishment of WACL to full membership in WACL in 1970.**

The roots of WACL's founding go back to 1958, when, at the initiative of the Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League (APACL) and the Inter-American Confederation for the Defence of the Continent (IACDC), the "Preparatory Conference for the World Anti-Communist Congress" was held, at which preparations were made for convening the first WACL congress.<sup>22</sup> After initial

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<sup>17</sup> Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> Milo Bošković, *Šesta kolona. Nastanak, organizacija i delovanje antijugoslovenske fašističke emigracije* (Zagreb: Birotehnika, 1985.; Novi Sad: NIŠRO „Dnevnik, 1985), 200-208; Stjepan Domankušić, Milivoje Levkov, *Politička emigracija: aktivnost političke emigracije protiv samoupravne socijalističke Jugoslavije i njenih oružanih snaga* (Beograd: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1974), 131-132.

<sup>19</sup> Belant, *Old Nazis, the New Right, and tje Republican Party*, 3, 12-15, 25; Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* New York: The Guilford Press), 1995, 45.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Aarons, John Loftus, *Unholy Trinity: How the Vatican's Nazi Networks Betrayed Western Intelligence to the Soviets* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), xvi.

<sup>21</sup> Tepeš, *Hrvatska politička emigracija-HSS*, 310-314.

<sup>22</sup> "Conference in Mexico Paves the Way for Anti-Communist Congress," *ABN Correspondence*, May/June 1958, 1; "Statement Issued Jointly by "The Inter-American Confederation for

enthusiasm, the first congress was cancelled,<sup>23</sup> and the start of the WACL stalled for the next nine years, although active work on its convening continued.<sup>24</sup>

CLM used this time to make its mark among the initiators, APACL and IACDC. The IACDC was a Latin American anti-communist organization and the idea for its creation arose in 1954 under the auspices of the CIA.<sup>25</sup> The first conference was held in 1955 in Rio de Janeiro, and Croats were also represented. At the next two conferences, Croats were represented through the anti-communist organization "Liberation of Europe," and at the 4th conference held in Guatemala in October 1958, a representative of the CLM was present for the first time.<sup>26</sup> The participation of Croats in the conferences of this organization continued throughout the 1960s.<sup>27</sup>

CLM achieved significant successes in APACL, in which it operated through ABN. APACL was founded in 1954 at the initiative of South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan, which were soon joined by South Vietnam,<sup>28</sup> and ABN President Stetsko began cooperating with them in 1955. Through Stetsko, CLM managed to internationalize the Croatian question at APACL conferences from 1963 to 1965. In their resolutions, the congresses gave support to the Croats in the fight for the restoration of national independence and for the break-up of Yugoslavia as an artificial creation, and Tito was characterized as a dictator and a "communist Trojan horse," who pushed the non-alignment of the countries of Africa and Latin America (LA) in the interests of Moscow.<sup>29</sup> As a sign of gratitude to Stetsko, the CLM gazette published – Long live Ukraine and Croatia!<sup>30</sup>

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the Defense of the Continent' and "The Asian Peoples' Anti-Communist League," Concerning a World Anti-Communist Congress," *ABN Correspondence*, March/April 1958, 4.

<sup>23</sup> "Anti-Communist Congress Only Proper Answer to Moscow's Plans of Peaceful Destruction of Freedom in the World," *ABN Correspondence*, May-June 1960, 24.

<sup>24</sup> Canon Voirin, "La Confederación Interamericana de Defensa del Continente (CIDC)," 83.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 82, 85.

<sup>26</sup> "Hrvatska na IV. Kontinentalnom Protukomunističkom Kongresu u Guatemali," *Hrvatska*, October 31, 1958, 1.

<sup>27</sup> "Protukomunističke organizacije stranih naroda odaju počast Hrvatskoj i poglavniku dr. Anti Paveliću," *Hrvatska*, December 24, 1967, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Ignacio Araujo, Ernesto Bohoslavsky, "The Circuits of Anti-Communist Repression between Asia and Latin America during the Second Cold War: Paraguay and the World Anti-Communist League," *EIAL – Estudios Interdisciplinarios De America Latina Y Le Caribe* 31(2020) no. 1: 108-109; Abramovici, "The World Anti-Communist League: Origins, Structures and Activities," 117.

<sup>29</sup> Tepeš, "Croats in Emigrant Organizations from Central and Eastern Europe during the First Half of the Cold War: International Peasant Union and Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations," 25.

<sup>30</sup> "9. konferencija APACL u Saigону osudila Jugoslaviju i iztakla pravo Hrvatske na nezavisnost," *Hrvatska*, July 31, 1964, 1.

The final decision to establish the WACL, and the official convening of the first WACL Congress, was made at the 12th APACL Conference, held from 3 to 9 November 1966 in Seoul. The opening of this 12th APACL conference coincided with the visit of US President Lyndon Johnson to Seoul,<sup>31</sup> which can also be interpreted as American support for APACL's activities. It was then decided that the next APACL conference would also be the first conference of the WACL.<sup>32</sup>

The first WACL Congress was held from September 25 to 30, 1967 in T'ai-pei, Taiwan. The Congress also enjoyed the support of Pope Paul VI, who, in his message of greeting and blessing to all anti-communists, condemned the atheistic and "anti-scientific" doctrines of "Marxism-Leninism".<sup>33</sup> The Congress was also attended by CLM member from Australia, Ivan Kokić, but as a member of the Australian national anti-communist delegation.<sup>34</sup> Kokić was active in the discussions, explaining the Croatian liberation struggle and the right of the Croatian people to their own independent state.<sup>35</sup>

From the beginning of the WACL onwards, congresses were usually held once a year, and WACL presidents, who always came from the country that hosted the congress, also had a one-year mandate. The congresses were opportunities for networking, on the basis of which the governments of the member states concluded long-standing economic and cultural bilateral ties, business agreements that included the arms trade, intelligence and experience of counter-guerrilla activities were exchanged, and intelligence and military personnel were jointly trained.<sup>36</sup> WACL congresses gathered hundreds of delegates from more than 70 countries on five continents, and in Asian countries they sometimes ended with mass gatherings in stadiums, attended by up to 100

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>32</sup> "World Anti-Communist League Initiated," *ABN Correspondence*, January/February 1967, 27-28.

<sup>33</sup> Canon Voirin, "La Confederation Interamericana de Defensa del Continente (CIDC)," 83.

<sup>34</sup> "The First Conference of The World Anti-Communist League," *ABN Correspondence*, November/December 1967, 5-6.

<sup>35</sup> "Ivica Kokić na Kongresu Svjetske Protuboljševičke Lige u Taipei-u," *Hrvatska*, November 30, 1967, 5.

<sup>36</sup> S. Anderson; J. L. Anderson, *Inside the League: The Shocking Exposure of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League*, 56, 104-109; Abramovici, "The World Anti-Communist League: Origins, Structures and Activities," 124; Araujo; Bohoslavsky, "The Circuits of Anti-Communist Repression between Asia and Latin America during the Second Cold War: Paraguay and the World Anti-Communist League," 118-119.

thousand people.<sup>37</sup> WACL member organisations can be classified into three groups. In the first, the most influential, were those organizations that had strong and open support from their governments, such as Asian countries and LA countries, where power was held in the hands of right-wing governments. The second was a group of organizations from the countries of the democratic West, such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe. The third group consisted of organizations of emigrants whose homelands were under communist rule, among which was the CLM.

For the first three years after the establishment of WACL, CLM did not have its own representative at the congresses, but was represented through the ABN.<sup>38</sup> The congress held in December 1968 in Saigon, South Vietnam, was not successful for the internationalization of the Croatian question because the Croatia was not mentioned in official statements,<sup>39</sup> and the need for the dissolution of Yugoslavia was mentioned only by ABN's president Stetsko in his speech.<sup>40</sup> The next, third WACL congress, held in Bangkok in December 1969, was much more successful for the internationalization of the Croatian question. In the final WACL declaration, in addition to supporting the liberation struggle of the CEE peoples and countries, Croatia was also mentioned.<sup>41</sup> President Hefer then sent a telegram greeting to the Congress.<sup>42</sup>

The difference in the WACL's attitude towards the Croatian question between the two conferences coincided with the Yugoslav foreign policy act of recognizing the Provisional Government of South Vietnam (Viet Cong) in 1969, which was contrary to the interests of South Vietnam, which was then one of the three main pillars of the WACL. In July 1969, the CLM condemned this Yugoslav move, noting that it did not recognize Yugoslavia, and therefore

<sup>37</sup> "Novi međunarodni uspjeh H.O.P.-a na vanjskoj fronti," *Hrvatska*, October 1970, 1-2; "Iz-vještaj sa pete konferencije Svjetske antikomunističke lige održane u Manili na Filipinima," *Hrvatska*, October 1971, 2; "X. Kongres Svjetske Anti-komunističke Lige" ["X. Congress of the World Anti-Communist League"], *Hrvatska*, July 1977, 1.

<sup>38</sup> "The Second World Anti-Communist League Conference in Saigon," *ABN Correspondence*, January/February 1969, 2; "III. Međunarodna konferencija Svjetske Antikomunističke Lige," *Hrvatska*, March 15, 1970, 5.

<sup>39</sup> "Joint Communiqué," *ABN Correspondence*, January/February 1969, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Yaroslav Stetsko, "Revolutions versus Nuclear War," *ABN Correspondence*, January/February 1969, 23.

<sup>41</sup> "Declaration Of the Third Annual Conference of The World Anti-Communist League," *ABN Correspondence*, January/February 1970, 13.

<sup>42</sup> "III. Međunarodna konferencija Svjetske Antikomunističke Lige," *Hrvatska*, March 15, 1970, 5.

considered all its acts<sup>43</sup> null and void. During 1970, Yugoslavia successfully negotiated the participation of the Viet Cong in the sessions of the NAM,<sup>44</sup> and at that time the CLM was invited to the WACL congress in 1970 in Kyoto, Japan.

### **The period of CLM's full membership in the WACL until the 1974 congress**

For a better understanding of CLM and WACL's activities in the period of the first half of the 1970s, it is necessary to look back at the most important international events from that time that affected WACL's key members. This was primarily the period of the first half of the Détente among the superpowers in the Cold War, which in the United States, as the leading superpower of the West, was marked by the mandate of US President Richard Nixon.<sup>45</sup>

In Europe, the period of Détente was significantly marked by the successful Eastern Policy (Ostpolitik) of German Chancellor Willy Brandt, which was based on the relaxation of relations with the Eastern Communist neighbouring countries. The peak of Détente in Europe was the Conference on Security and Cooperation, and the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975, which de facto recognized the borders established after the end of the Second World War and their inviolability, as well as respect for human rights and the right of peoples to self-determination. The policy of Détente also resulted in a weakening of American support for CEE emigrant organizations sponsored by the FEC.<sup>46</sup> Those who continue to operate are mostly emigrants outside the framework of the FEC, such as ABN. Because of this, there was a change in the activities of the CPE. On the international anti-communist

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<sup>43</sup> "Declaration," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, January 1970, 7; "Croatian Declaration," *ABN Correspondence*, September/October 1969, 14.

<sup>44</sup> Jovan Čavoški, *Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 117-118.

<sup>45</sup> Robert S. Litwak, *Detente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

<sup>46</sup> Anna Mazurkiewicz, *Voices of the Silenced Peoples in the Global Cold War: The Assembly of Captive European Nations 1954-1972* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021); *The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare: Cold War Organizations Sponsored by the National Committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee*, ed. Katalin Kadar Lynn (Saint Helena, Ca, SAD: Helena History Press, LLC, 2013); *East Central Europe in Exile, Volume 2: Transatlantic Identities*, ed. Anna Mazurkiewicz (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013).

scene, the CPP ceased to operate,<sup>47</sup> and the only factor remained the CLM through its activities in the ABN and WACL.

During this period, the policy of the Holy See changed drastically in the spirit of the Vatican Council and opening to the Eastern Bloc. Croatian emigrants viewed the signing of the Protocol between Yugoslavia and the Vatican in 1966, the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1970, and Tito's visit to the Pope in the Vatican in March 1971 with a lot of criticism, but also with a dose of caution, respecting the right of the Pope to conduct foreign policy in the interest of the Catholic Church.<sup>48</sup> The new Vatican policy had much deeper consequences on LA countries, especially after the joint LA bishops conference in the Colombian city of Medellin in 1968, which was personally opened by Pope Pius VI, which was also the first visit of a pope to the LA in history. On it, the Church paved the way for Liberation Theology, turning from a narrow circle of the wealthy elite and army to a broad layer of the poor population, which put some priests and bishops in a hostile position towards military right-wing dictatorships, and brought them closer to revolutionary movements, which were close to the communists.<sup>49</sup> During this period, the LA region was also strongly marked by the violent overthrow of Chilean socialist president Salvador Allende in 1973.

In Asia, events related to Taiwan and South Vietnam were significant. In October 1971, the People's Republic of China (PR China) was admitted to the United Nations (UN) and the Security Council instead of Taiwan.<sup>50</sup> At the same time, its rapprochement with the United States took place, culminating in Nixon's visit to Beijing in February 1972. In the spring of 1973, the U.S. Army left Vietnam, and in 1975. North Vietnam occupied South Vietnam.

It was also turbulent in Yugoslavia. The Croatian Spring ended in December 1971 with its suppression and the repression of the Yugoslav authorities against its participants, which caused strong demonstrations among the Cro-

<sup>47</sup> Tepeš, *Hrvatska politička emigracija-HSS*, 234.

<sup>48</sup> Miroslav Akmadža, *Katolička crkva u komunističkoj Hrvatskoj 1945.-1980* (Zagreb: Slavonski Brod; Despot Infnitus d.o.o., 2013), 322; Petar Dragišić, "In Search of Modus Vivendi: Yugoslavia and the Holy See 1963-1971," In: *Breaking down the bipolarity: Yugoslavia's Foreign Relations during the Cold War*, ed. Martin Previšić (Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021), 223; Pavao Tijan, "Povodom posjeta Tita svetom ocu Pavlu VI," *Hrvatska revija* 21(1971), no. 2-3: 310-314.

<sup>49</sup> Lernoux, *Cry of the People*, 37; Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts About the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America-and Beyond* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 22-24; Abramovici, "The World Anti-Communist League: Origins, Structures and Activities," 124.

<sup>50</sup> Čavoški, *The Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, 131.

atian diaspora around the world.<sup>51</sup> During this period, the YSSS increased the number of murders of Croatian emigrants,<sup>52</sup> and on the other hand, the CPE intensified their armed and violent activities against Yugoslavia.<sup>53</sup> The final phase of the unification process was then taking place in the CPE, which resulted in the establishment of the Croatian National Council (CNC) in 1974, an organization that the CLM did not support, considering itself the only Croatian umbrella organization to which all others must adhere.<sup>54</sup> Yugoslavia also making some policy acts contrary to the interests of the leading WACL countries. First, there were the already mentioned policy acts towards the Viet Cong, then lobbying for the entry of the communist PR China into the Security Council and the United Nations (UN) in 1971,<sup>55</sup> and finally the successful lobbying for North Korea's admission to the NAM in 1975.<sup>56</sup> Such Yugoslav acts certainly facilitated CLM's strengthening of its position at WACL congresses.

In the early 1970s, WACL congresses were held in Kyoto, Japan, from September 15 to 20, 1970,<sup>57</sup> then from July 21 to 25, 1971 in Manila, Philippines,<sup>58</sup> and from August 24 to 27, 1972 in Ciudad de Mexico, which was the first time outside of Asia and was organized by the Mexican Anti-Communist Alliance.<sup>59</sup> The LA Anti-Communist Confederation, which was the LA branch of the WACL, was also founded at that congress.<sup>60</sup> This also showed a profound change in the geopolitical framework after the admission of the PR China to the UN, after which Asian countries turned strongly towards the LA in search of anti-communist allies.<sup>61</sup> The following year, in 1973, the WACL Congress

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<sup>51</sup> Ivan Tepeš, "Odraz sloma hrvatskoga proljeća na rad s hrvatskim iseljenicima," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 55(2023) no. 3: 503-507; Krašić, *Hrvatsko proljeće i Hrvatska politička emigracija*.

<sup>52</sup> For more details, see: Vukušić, *Tajni rat UDBE protiv hrvatskoga iseljeništva*.

<sup>53</sup> For more details see: Tokić, *Croatian Radical Separatism and Diaspora Terrorism During the Cold War*.

<sup>54</sup> Zlatko Markus, "Dr. Ante Bonifačić i 'hrvatsko triješe'," 638.

<sup>55</sup> Čavoški, *The Non-Aligned Movement Summits: A History*, 131.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 172-173.

<sup>57</sup> "Novi međunarodni uspjeh H.O.P.-a na vanjskoj fronti," *Hrvatska*, October 1970, 1.

<sup>58</sup> "Izvjestaj sa pete konferencije Svjetske antikomunističke lige održane u Manili na Filipinima," *Hrvatska*, October 1971, 2.

<sup>59</sup> Srećko Pšeničnik, "Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu," *Hrvatska*, October 1972, 1.

<sup>60</sup> Canon Voirin, 'La Confederación Interamericana de Defensa del Continente (CIDC)', 83.

<sup>61</sup> Araujo, Bohoslavsky, "The Circuits of Anti-Communist Repression between Asia and Latin America during the Second Cold War: Paraguay and the World Anti-Communist League," 110.

was supposed to be held in London, but the WACL leadership postponed it because the British Foreign Office, despite permission to hold it, and after all the preparations made, refused to issue entry visas to representatives of Taiwan.<sup>62</sup> The planned congress was therefore postponed, with the consent of the US State Department, to April 1974 to Washington. It was hosted by the American Council for World Freedom (ACWF), the American branch of the WACL founded in 1970.<sup>63</sup>

Greetings to these congresses were regularly sent by the leaders of the Asian countries involved in the WACL, such as the President of Taiwan Chang Kai Shek, the Prime Minister of Thailand Thanon Kittiarachorn, the President of South Korea Park Chung Hee, the President of South Vietnam Ngyen Van Thieu, the Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and the President of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos, who in one of the greetings emphasized the connection of the Philippines with the Euro-American continent given that the Philippines is the only Christian country in Asia.<sup>64</sup> In addition to the Asian ones, greetings were also sent by some leaders of the Western Bloc countries, such as Australian President John Gorton and US Vice President Spiro Agnew.<sup>65</sup> Various distinguished guests also came to the congresses, and certainly the most interesting of them in that period was Juanita Castro, sister of Cuban President Fidel Castro, who participated in the congress in Manila in 1971.<sup>66</sup>

The topics that prevailed at the congresses concerned criticism of current international events related to prominent WACL members. Thus, former South Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Huy Quát expressed hope at a congress in Mexico that the United States would not leave his country to the communists from North Vietnam.<sup>67</sup> WACL leadership condemned the policy of Détente,<sup>68</sup> the policy of peaceful coexistence and easing of tensions, claiming that coexistence was in fact a Soviet conspiracy that suited the USSR, so that it could spread communism unhindered in peacetime without a direct

<sup>62</sup> "VII. Kongres WACL-a," *Hrvatska*, April 1974, 1.

<sup>63</sup> Anderson S.; Anderson J. L., *Inside the League: The Shocking Exposure of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League*, 83.

<sup>64</sup> "Novi međjunarodni uspjeh H.O.P.-a na vanjskoj fronti," *Hrvatska*, October 1970, 1; Pšeničnik, "Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu," *Hrvatska*, February 1973, 4; Pšeničnik, "Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu," *Hrvatska*, March 1973, 2.

<sup>65</sup> "Novi međjunarodni uspjeh H.O.P.-a na vanjskoj fronti," *Hrvatska*, October 1970, 1.

<sup>66</sup> "Izvjestaj sa pete konferencije Svjetske antikomunističke lige održane u Manili na Filipinima," *Hrvatska*, October 1971, 2.

<sup>67</sup> Pšeničnik, "Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu," *Hrvatska*, November 1972, 3.

<sup>68</sup> "Guatemala Hosts WACL Executive Bord," *ABN Correspondence*, January/February 1974, 42.

military conflict with a stronger opponent.<sup>69</sup> They were also bothered by the thawing of relations with communist China, considering it a betrayal of the former American allies, claiming that regardless of the mutual conflict between the USSR and China, the two countries share the same goal of communist enslavement of humanity.<sup>70</sup> Disillusioned with the work of the UN, they demanded its dissolution, believing that it had not achieved its purpose, and instead proposed the creation of a new organization of world nations.<sup>71</sup> On the issue of Europe, the WACL called for the strengthening of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and support for the liberation of subjugated peoples by Russian imperialism and communism.<sup>72</sup> Although he sent them a telegram of support on the occasion of the first congress, the Pope quickly found himself on the WACL's blacklist due to his actions in the LA, and in 1972 they sent him a telegram from Mexico accusing him of betraying the principles of Christianity and promoting communism.<sup>73</sup> In the working committees of the Congress, in which CLM members also participated, various covert methods of communist activity were discussed. The infiltration of the Catholic Church, as well as Protestant churches and Buddhist circles, was also discussed. Then about the infiltration of communists among political parties from all parts of the political spectrum, as well as about the manipulation of university manifestations, left-wing intellectuals and peace organizations, to use them to present their goals as the world common good and then label governments that do not accept it as "undemocratic, totalitarian and perverse" in front of the public. The international media were declared guilty of creating false accusations and damaging the reputation of well-known anti-communist fighters, accusing them of fascism, dictatorship and tyranny. In this way, the media created a favourable climate for the overthrow of such governments among the broad population.<sup>74</sup>

The first WACL congress to which the CLM was directly invited was the one held in Kyoto, in September 1970. At that meeting, CLM as an organization was accepted as a full member of WACL, still operating within the ABN,<sup>75</sup> and

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<sup>69</sup> "Enslaved Nations Must Be Set Free," *ABN Correspondence*, November/December 1967, 7; Pšeničnik, "Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu," *Hrvatska*, June 1973, 4; "WACL Stands for Universal Freedom," *ABN Correspondence*, May/June 1974, 7-8.

<sup>70</sup> "WACL Stands for Universal Freedom," *ABN Correspondence*, May/June 1974, 7-8; "Hrvati na pozornici svieta," *Hrvatska*, May 1975, 2.

<sup>71</sup> "From Washington WACL Resolutions," *ABN Correspondence*, July/August 1974, 41.

<sup>72</sup> "Actions Proposed," *ABN Correspondence*, September/October 1971, 6.

<sup>73</sup> "Svjetska Antikomunistička Liga kritizira papu," *Hrvatska*, September 1972, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Pšeničnik, "Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu," *Hrvatska*, March 1973, 2, 6.

<sup>75</sup> "Novi međunarodni uspjeh H.O.P.-a na vanjskoj fronti," *Hrvatska*, October 1970, 1-2

Srećko Pšeničnik became the permanent representative of CLM to WACL.<sup>76</sup> From the beginning of its activity in the WACL, CLM set as its main goal to inform the world public about the struggle of Croats for independence,<sup>77</sup> but it immediately encountered the first difficulties, which were the result of Yugoslavia's international position. To Pšeničnik's request that the issue of Croatia be included in the resolution on the condemnation of Soviet imperialism, some delegates replied that Yugoslavia was "outside the Soviet occupation" and therefore the position of Croatia was different.<sup>78</sup> He was more successful with the proposal to condemn the Yugoslav communist government for the murder of Croatian emigrants in Western Europe,<sup>79</sup> which was accepted and unanimously voted in the form of a WACL resolution, which condemned the Yugoslav government for "international crime" and "brutal violations of human rights".<sup>80</sup> The CLM members were particularly pleased with this because such a formulation was printed in the materials from the congress, but also in the press of all WACL members, considering it an expression of international recognition of the "strong and uncompromising Croatian resistance against Serbo-Yugoslav communism".<sup>81</sup> Pšeničnik also used the Congress to present the thesis that the Croatian people were among the first, since 1941, to fight against communism and the Soviet attack, and he also criticized the Yugoslav policy of non-alignment, considering it a disguised policy in the service of communism. He claimed that in this way, Yugoslavia with its diplomats, who are experts in communist infiltration, was opening the way for Beijing and Moscow in those countries that they could not directly penetrate on their own. As an example, he cited the case of Malaysia, which first established relations with Yugoslavia in 1969, and after a year the embassies of the USSR and its satellites were opened in its capital Kuala Lumpur.<sup>82</sup>

After initial partial successes, at the next congress, held in Manila in 1971, the CLM members achieved more notable successes, because, unlike the last congress, they included Croatia and Croats in several resolutions without any

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<sup>76</sup> Srećko Pšeničnik, "Deseta godišnjica Svjetske antikomunističke lige," *Hrvatska*, April 1977, 2.

<sup>77</sup> "Dvanaesti kongres Svjetske protukomunističke lige," *Hrvatska*, June 1979, 1.

<sup>78</sup> "Novi međunarodni uspjeh H.O.P.-a na vanjskoj fronti," *Hrvatska*, October 1970, 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> "Resolutions Of The 4th WACL Conference," *ABN Correspondence*, November/December 1970, 36.

<sup>81</sup> "Novi međunarodni uspjeh H.O.P.-a na vanjskoj fronti," *Hrvatska*, October 1970, 2.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

problems.<sup>83</sup> The congress had the open support of the Philippine authorities, so Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos opened it. At CLM's suggestion, the congress unanimously adopted a Resolution condemning the suppression of liberty in Croatia by The Yugoslav Government under Tito.<sup>84</sup> Like the Resolution from the previous congress, the murders of Croatian emigrants were again mentioned in this one, but this time the dissatisfaction of Croats with the then current process of decentralization in Yugoslavia was also expressed, considering it exclusively a means of saving this artificial creation. The Resolution also denied the existence of the Yugoslav nation, and the so-called Yugoslav national communism was called a fraud intended for world public opinion with the aim of communist subjugation of the world.<sup>85</sup> At this congress, the CLM members emphasized the condemnation of the post-war crime against half a million Croats near Bleiburg, so the Resolution decided that the Fifth WACL Congress solemnly condemns the Yugoslav Communist Government for the suppression of liberty, the continuous brutal violations of human rights and – in the name of justice – energetically demands an international inquiry and trial for all those responsible for the horrible massacre of unarmed Croatian soldiers and civilians near Bleiburg as well as during “death marches” across Yugoslavia, headed and committed by the Yugoslav Communist Army at the end of the Second World War whose leaders and commanders are at present the chiefs of the Yugoslav Communist Government.<sup>86</sup>

Obviously, with each new congress, the CLM members made more and more progress and expanded their influence, which was evident at the Congress in Mexico in 1972, the importance of which the CLM members compared to the UN General Assembly,<sup>87</sup> as evidenced by the CLM's extensive reports from that congress. At that congress, CLM was strongly influenced by the events caused by the collapse of the Croatian Spring in the homeland. In addition to the permanent representative of Pšeničnik, CLM was also represented at the congress by President Hefer, both of whom were part of the ABN

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<sup>83</sup> Resolution on the Support of the Liberation Struggle of Peoples Subjugated by Russian Imperialism,” *ABN Correspondence*, September/October 1971, 8; “Actions Proposed,” *ABN Correspondence*, September/October 1971, 6.

<sup>84</sup> “Medjunarodna pravda se budi. – Svjetska antikomunistička liga (WACL) osudjuje genocid kod Bleiburga. – Hrvatski oslobod. Pokret na djelu,” *Hrvatska*, October 1971, 1; “Izvještaj sa pete konferencije Svjetske antikomunističke lige održane u Manili na Filipinima,” *Hrvatska*, October 1971, 2.

<sup>85</sup> “Resolution,” *Hrvatska*, October 1971, 1.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> “Šesti kongres Svjetske Antikomunističke Lige,” *Hrvatska*, September 1972, 1.

delegation.<sup>88</sup> Pšeničnik spoke at the congress as a delegate of the CLM, but also as a representative of the ABN, pointing out that Mexico is threatened by the communist danger, which is based in Cuba, and recently in Chile, and concluded that Europe still remained a key point in the fight against world communism, namely the revolutionary struggle of enslaved peoples in the USSR, satellite countries and Yugoslavia.<sup>89</sup> In his address, Hefer denounced peaceful coexistence as a communist deception by which Moscow lulls and deceives the free world in an effort to obtain international recognition of the status quo. As proof of his thesis, he cited Khrushchev's statement that coexistence is only a tactic in the present circumstances.<sup>90</sup> He went on to criticize Tito as the most effective agent of Moscow, who penetrated Africa with communism and politically connected several young African states into a bloc of – supposedly – non-aligned states, and on Moscow's order he was preparing the ground for the European Security Conference, by which the governments of Western European countries would legalize the existing situation in Europe. He pointed out that the collapse of the Croatian Spring showed the real face of Titoism, which is no more moderate, liberal and humane than the one that exists in Soviet Russia and other satellite states, and therefore he demanded that Tito's persecution of Croatian universities and intellectuals and the cultural institution of Matica Hrvatska be condemned. Hefer demanded a WACL resolution that would condemn the hegemony of only one, the leading nation, in multinational state formations, which dangerously threatens the biological survival of other enslaved peoples, as is the case in Czechoslovakia, the USSR and Yugoslavia. He also demanded a resolution justifying the liberation struggle of the Croatian people for their democratic state with the Croatian historical right and the right to self-determination.<sup>91</sup> At that congress, Hefer also entered into a discussion with the Philippine senator, also the president of their ruling party, Jose J. Roy, over his claim about the evolution of Yugoslav communism,<sup>92</sup> which was obviously the result of the then established diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Yugoslavia.<sup>93</sup>

Congress also adopted Resolution No. 22, which condemns the Yalta Treaties and the creation of communist Yugoslavia against the will of the Croatian

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.; "World Anti-Communist Conference in Defense of Subjugated Nations," *ABN Correspondence*, September/October 1972, 5.

<sup>89</sup> "Govor dr. S. Pšeničnika na kongresu WCL-a," *Hrvatska*, November 1972, 4.

<sup>90</sup> "Govor predsjednika H.O.P-a na Kongresu," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, October 1972, 1.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>92</sup> "Šesti kongres Svjetske Antikomunističke Lige," *Hrvatska*, September 1972, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Archie B. Resos, "Diplomatic Relations between the Philippines and Eastern European Socialist Bloc under President Ferdinand E. Marcos, 1965-1986.," *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 8 (2014) No. 3, 153.

and other peoples involved in it. Its federal system has been called fiction, because in fact Serbian hegemony and rigid centralist policy are carried out through the League of Communists. The Resolution claims that during the Second World War, the Croatian people restored their national and independent state of Croatia by a general people's revolution, which the great powers, against the will of the Croats, annulled at the Yalta Conference and restored Yugoslavia after the war, handing it over without elections to Tito and the communists, who slaughtered half a million Croatian soldiers and civilians.<sup>94</sup> On the basis of all of the above, the WACL Congress condemned the unjust Yalta Agreements, by which various European countries were handed over to the Soviets and the Communists without their consent; it accused the Yugoslav communist regime of oppressing the Croatian people and foreign occupation after the end of the war; it condemned Tito for the mass imprisonment of students, workers and other freedom fighters throughout Croatia, with the violence perpetrated by the Yugoslav army and security service; it also accused him of banning the press, especially the newspaper of *Matica hrvatska*. The Congress further supported the liberation struggle of the Croatian people for the establishment of a free, independent and democratic Croatia, believing that only such a Croatia can be a guarantee of peace, progress and political stability of Southeast Europe. In the end, it was requested that Yugoslavia, as an artificial creation of Versailles and Yalta, be replaced with the free and democratic states of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, guaranteeing the Bulgarians in Macedonia, and the Albanians and Montenegrins the right to freely decide their own destiny.<sup>95</sup> From this congress, support for Croatian students who are fighting for the "independence of Croatia" was also expressed in a Resolution adopted at the ABN's proposal.<sup>96</sup>

The CLM attributed the success of this congress to its media echo in the Mexican newspaper *Replica*, which dedicated an entire issue to the congress, but, more importantly for the CLM, also brought a large text criticizing Tito and his dictatorship.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> "Resolution No. 22," *Hrvatska*, November 1972, 3.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> "World Anti-Communist League in Support of Human Rights and National Independence," *ABN Correspondence*, September/October 1972, 8.

<sup>97</sup> Pšeničnik, "Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu," *Hrvatska*, October 1972, 1-2.

## Difficulties and successes of CLM at WACL congresses in Washington and Rio de Janeiro

The mid-1970s marked some turbulence in the work of the WACL, which was most evident at the congresses in Washington in 1974 and Rio de Janeiro in 1975. The main stumbling block was the disrespect for human rights by LA military dictatorships and the membership of former fascists, Nazis and their sympathizers in the ranks of the WACL. It was because of such elements, primarily in the ranks of anti-communist organizations from Western and Northern Europe, and because of widespread anti-Semitism in the WACL, that the British organization Foreign Affairs Circle, led by Geoffrey Stewart-Smith, withdrew from the WACL in 1974.<sup>98</sup> The same reasons have been warned since 1973 by WACL's American representatives gathered in the ACWF, who left the WACL in 1975.<sup>99</sup>

Before leaving, during a long campaign to discredit certain organizations in WACL, Stewart-Smith published a discrediting article in his newsletter about the CLM and former Ustasha members, but this time because of their collaboration with the communists, not just the Nazis. They have been called false anti-communists, substantiating this claim with a series of examples of Ustasha-communist cooperation before Second World War, during its duration, but in a certain way also after its end, during the Cold War period. The article was written for Stewart-Smith by a sympathizer of the interwar Kingdom of Yugoslavia, S. R. Vlahović, which caused negative reactions from CLM members.<sup>100</sup>

The criticism of WACL by ACWF members and the Foreign Affairs Circle was mostly reflected in the representatives of CEE nations represented in the ABN, including the CLM, which was most evident at the congress in Washington.<sup>101</sup>

Congress, although allowed by the State Department, was not sufficiently covered by the media in the United States, which the CLM members attribut-

<sup>98</sup> Abramovici, "The World Anti-Communist League: Origins, Structures and Activities," 114.

<sup>99</sup> Anderson S.; Anderson J. L., *Inside the League: The Shocking Exposure of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League*, 86, 91.

<sup>100</sup> "Konzervativci u službi crvenih," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, February-March 1974, 2.

<sup>101</sup> Anderson S.; Anderson J. L., *Inside the League: The Shocking Exposure of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League*, 23-24, 43-45; Pšeničnik, "Deseta godišnjica Svjetske antikomunističke lige," *Hrvatska*, April 1977, 2.

ed to the then current agreements between the United States and the USSR on the reduction of nuclear weapons.<sup>102</sup> The CLM members arrived at that congress in the largest number up to that time. The delegation consisted of Pšeničnik, Asančaić, Bonifačić, Ante Marković and Jakov Vrbanić,<sup>103</sup> expecting Croatia to be granted the status of a WACL member nation, with CLM as its representative. At that time, the CLM was part of a wider process of separating individual national organizations from the ABN into independent representatives of their nations in the WACL. This was first achieved in Washington by the Ukrainian delegation, which, at the meeting of the WACL Executive Committee held just before the beginning of the Congress, won the recognition of Ukraine as a full member nation with voting rights. At the same time, other members had problems, and Croatia was only granted associate member status.<sup>104</sup>

At that time, the CLM encountered problems due to its Ustasha heritage, the stigma of war crimes and cooperation with the Nazis during the Second World War, about which Pšeničnik left written testimony. The problems were primarily created by the American David Martin, who sent a five-page letter to the chairman of the Congressional Preparatory Committee, US General Thomas A. Lane. In it, he made accusations against the CLM, and at the end of the letter he concluded that he did not intend to participate in the congress in the same room with Ante Pavelić's successors.<sup>105</sup> The American congress organizers initially did not mention the letter to the CLM members, and explained the difficulties in regulating CLM's status in the WACL as being of a formal nature. However, the CLM members received a copy of the letter through their European and LA friends from WACL.<sup>106</sup> After reviewing its contents, CLM members called the claims made therein false accusations of Serbian and communist hoaxes, and accused David Martin of subjectivity, given that as an American officer during the Second World War he stayed in the headquarters of Draža Mihailović<sup>107</sup> and thus "politically and militarily

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<sup>102</sup> "Hrvatski Oslobođilački Pokret dobio je najveću pobjedu iza 1945. godine," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, April-May 1974, 1.

<sup>103</sup> "VII. Kongres WACL-a," *Hrvatska*, April 1974, 2.

<sup>104</sup> "World Anti-Communist League Holds its 7th Conference in Washington," *ABN Correspondence*, May/June 1974, 6; Srećko Pšeničnik, "Deveta generalna skupština Svjetske antikomunističke lige u Seoul-u," *Hrvatska*, September 1976, 5.

<sup>105</sup> Pšeničnik, "Deveta generalna skupština Svjetske antikomunističke lige u Seoul-u," *Hrvatska*, September 1976, 5.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> On the execution of Draža Mihailović, after the court verdict of the communist authorities in 1946, David Martin published a book glorifying Mihailović's war merit. In it, he also cited Ustasha crimes and accusations against the Catholic Church in Croatia for collaborating

supported the Chetnik genocidal actions” against the Croatian people and the ISC.<sup>108</sup> The organizers of the congress, and representatives of the U.S. administration, questioned Pšeničnik as CLM’s permanent representative with questions about the claims in the letter. Pšeničnik claimed that the accusations in the letter were taken from partisan-Yugoslav publications, which he first discussed with Stefan Possony, a very influential member of the ACWF. Possony was a native of Vienna, and on the eve of the Second World War he was a political adviser to the French Ministry of War and Foreign Affairs, first in Paris and then in the exile government in London, and as such, according to Pšeničnik, he could not be objective either. In that conversation, Possony was interested in Pšeničnik’s opinion of Pavelić, and why the ISC remained with the Germans until the end, given that it had an alternative in the Anglo-Americans? In addition, he was interested in the issue of crimes committed. Pšeničnik replied that Pavelić was not the Croatian Quisling because he did not replace any other Croatian government, and that as a statesman he represented the only solution that had no alternative, and that was the Croatian state, and that in the war circumstances of that time there was no other foreign policy alternative for that solution, but the Axis powers. He called the stories about major crimes communist and Serbian hoaxes.<sup>109</sup> At the congress, there were also never-proven allegations circulating about the existence of baskets with human eyes under Pavelić’s desk during the war,<sup>110</sup> which appeared in a novel by an Italian author during the war and was published in English just after the end of the war.<sup>111</sup>

At the same time, CLM members Bonifačić, Vrban and Marković, with the previous great help of Croatian emigrants from Chicago and Cleveland, began to lobby, explain and document the facts among the delegates of the Congress with the books they brought, including books about Bleiburg and

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with the Ustasha (David Martin, *Ally Betrayed: The Uncensored Story of Tito and Mihailovich*, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946), 47-67); Martin was also close to the Serbian, Chetnik-oriented emigration, so in 1966 he participated in the congress of the Serbian National Defense in Chicago (Bošković, *Šesta kolona. Nastanak, organizacija i delovanje antijugoslovenske fašističke emigracije*, 203).

<sup>108</sup> Pšeničnik, “Deveta generalna skupština Svjetske antikomunističke lige u Seoul-u,” *Hrvatska*, September 1976, 5.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>110</sup> “VII. Kongres WACL-a,” *Hrvatska*, April 1974, 1; Similar accusations appeared a decade later with the American authors of a book about the WACL. It lists several examples of Ustasha crimes, additionally stating that in Zagreb cafes, the Ustasha proudly displayed the extracted eyes and other human organs of their victims (S. Anderson, J. L. Anderson, *Inside the League: The Shocking Expose of How Terrorists, Nazis, and Latin American Death Squads Have Infiltrated the World Anti-Communist League*, 28).

<sup>111</sup> Curzio Malaparte, *Kaputt* (New York: E. Dutton&Co., Inc., 1946), 266.

Croatian history and culture. According to the CLM members, the foreign delegations supported the Croatian position with full understanding, which was the beginning of a principled discussion on all nationalist movements at the congress.<sup>112</sup>

Finally, Pšeničnik managed to reach the author of the letter, Martin, at receptions in the salons of the US Senate through Slava Stetsko, the ABN president's wife. In the conversation, Martin immediately mentioned the terrible Ustasha crimes during the war, to which Pšeničnik repeated his claims that these were all hoaxes, justifying the Ustasha that they had to fight back according to the opportunities available to them. To Martin's remark that there was no justification for the murder of the civilian population, Bonifačić, who had joined the conversation in the meantime, immediately mentioned the Allied bombing of Dresden with napalm bombs, which Martin called hoaxes and lies, after which the CLM members gave up further discussion, considering it futile.<sup>113</sup>

Regardless of the fact that Croatia did not receive the status of a member nation at that time, the flags of the congress participants included the Croatian tricolour with a checkerboard,<sup>114</sup> and the Resolution of the CLM was adopted on April 10 under the title "On The Dissolution of Yugoslavia," with the conclusion of the WACL: "that the only satisfactory solution to bring peace, prosperity and democracy in Yugoslavia is the dissolution of this artificial creation and the reestablishment of a Croat, Slovene and Serbian separate state as a part of the United Europe".<sup>115</sup>

In addition to CLM's problems, the Washington congress was also marked by an open conflict between the delegation from the USA and the LA bloc of countries, led by Prof. Raymundo Guerrero, President of the Mexican Anti-Communist Federation and Prof. Rafael Rodriguez, Secretary General of the LA Anti-Communist Confederation, whom CLM members also considered "sincere friends of the Croatian liberation struggle".<sup>116</sup> The CLM members concluded that LA representatives advocated "without fear and

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<sup>112</sup> "Hrvatski Oslobođilački Pokret dobio je najveću pobjedu iza 1945. godine," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, April/May 1974, 1; Pšeničnik, "Deveta generalna skupština Svjetske antikomunističke lige u Seoul-u," *Hrvatska*, September 1976, 6.

<sup>113</sup> Pšeničnik, "Deveta generalna skupština Svjetske antikomunističke lige u Seoul-u," *Hrvatska*, September 1976, 6.

<sup>114</sup> "Hrvatski Oslobođilački Pokret dobio je najveću pobjedu iza 1945. godine," *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, April-May 1974, 1.

<sup>115</sup> "VII. Kongres WACL-a," *Hrvatska*, April 1974, 1; "WACL Washington Resolutions," *ABN Correspondence*, May/June 1974, 47.

<sup>116</sup> Pšeničnik, "Deveta generalna skupština Svjetske antikomunističke lige u Seoul-u," *Hrvatska*, September 1976, 6.

democratic complexes” the original ideas of “healthy nationalism,” to which every nation is entitled “according to its own interests, understandings and needs”.<sup>117</sup> At that time, the Americans also proposed a resolution that would indirectly condemn extremely right-wing political movements and military governments in LA and Asia, but the proposal was rejected by a two-thirds majority after several hours of exhaustive discussion.<sup>118</sup>

What the CLM members failed to do in Washington came true a year later, at the WACL congress in Rio de Janeiro, in April 1975. At the meeting, Croatia, represented by the CLM, was accepted as a permanent national member of the WACL, after many years of consideration and voting. According to CLM members, the key role in favour of Croatia’s admission was played by representatives of South Korea and Taiwan.<sup>119</sup> CLM members considered this event to be Croatia’s greatest international success, comparing it to the international recognition of the ISC, which was recognized by countries with a total population of one billion, while WACL represents two billion people. The congress was attended by an eight-member delegation of the CLM led by the acting president of the CLM Asančaić, as well as Pšeničnik and Bonifačić. The CLM press was especially proud to point out the presence of some other delegates of Croatian roots, such as the delegate of the anti-communist delegation from Chile Domić, the son of a Croatian worker from Dalmatia, and Otto Molden, the leader of the European federalists, the great-grandson of Petar Preradović and the son of Paula Preradović.<sup>120</sup>

The day before the beginning of the congress, CLM sent a memorandum to WACL, in which Tito and Yugoslavia were criticized as an artificial creation, denying the existence of an imposed Yugoslav nation. Accusations of the post-war Bleiburg massacre were repeated, citing the figure of 300,000 killed men, women and children. The memorandum criticized Yugoslavia for hypocrisy for publicly supporting left-wing people’s liberation movements around the world, giving them political, military and economic aid, while at the same time imprisoning thousands of Croatian students, workers and poets, who had rebelled against the authorities in mass protests, in “disenfranchised Croatia,” in “dark prisons and concentration camps”.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Srećko Pšeničnik, “Deseta godišnjica Svjetske antikomunističke lige,” *Hrvatska*, April 1977, 2.

<sup>118</sup> Pšeničnik, “Deveta generalna skupština Svjetske antikomunističke lige u Seoul-u,” *Hrvatska*, September 1976, 6.

<sup>119</sup> “Hrvati na pozornici svijeta,” *Hrvatska*, May 1975, 1.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

<sup>121</sup> “Croatia Demands Freedom and Independence,” *ABN Correspondence*, May/August 1975, 11.

At the congress itself, the CLM, in cooperation with the Bulgarian Liberation Movement, proposed a Resolution,<sup>122</sup> which was adopted under the title "On Titoist Trojan Horse".<sup>123</sup> The Resolution primarily stated Tito's public admission that his theory of independent socialist states had helped the expansion of international communism.<sup>124</sup> Given that Tito's trip to LA countries had already been announced at the time of this congress,<sup>125</sup> which meant a potential huge promotion of "Titoist communism through subtle economic infiltration," the WACL congress sent a request to all members to inform their governments and public opinion about the "insidious and dangerous communist infiltration" in LA and Africa through the "Titoist Trojan Horse," and to organize protests against the propaganda of the "communist dictator Tito," whose goal is to create a "Titoist South America".<sup>126</sup> In the same Resolution, the part in which the support of WACL members was sought for the annexation of Albanian and Macedonian provinces from Yugoslavia to Bulgaria and Albania was particularly interesting,<sup>127</sup> which actually meant the dismemberment of the Yugoslav republics of Macedonia and Serbia, i.e. the annexation of Kosovo to Albania.

The report from this congress, and in the wake of WACL's criticism of the Catholic Church, was used by the CLM to criticize the Vatican's rapprochement with Yugoslavia. They pointed out that the signed Protocols within the Croatian clergy have created suspicious priests, such as those operating in Poland, Spain and Brazil, concluding that the priestly robe does not create servants of God everywhere. They believed that it was not easy for individuals around the world to notice all the differences between the clergy, while they could because they knew how to recognize the great difference between Svetozar Rittig<sup>128</sup> and Alojzije Stepinac.<sup>129</sup>

While the CLM members were delighted with their successes in the WACL, the rest of the CPE was indifferent to this, and they did not follow these activities through their press, which made the CLM members extremely

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<sup>122</sup> "Rezolucija," *Hrvatska*, May 1975, 3.

<sup>123</sup> "On Titoist Trojan Horse," *ABN Correspondence*, May/August 1975, 39-40.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Tito's trip was realized only the following year, when he visited Mexico, Panama and Venezuela in March 1976.

<sup>126</sup> "Rezolucija," *Hrvatska*, May 1975, 3.

<sup>127</sup> "On Titoist Trojan Horse," *ABN Correspondence*, May-August 1975, 40.

<sup>128</sup> Svetozar Rittig (1873-1961) was a Croatian Catholic priest and politician, who in September 1943 sided with the Partisans and continued to support the policy of the new Yugoslav communist government until the end of his life.

<sup>129</sup> "Hrvati na pozornici svieta," *Hrvatska*, May 1975, 2.

dissatisfied. They especially resented the press of Croatian organizations that advocated unity of Croats and supported the establishment of the CNC, believing that the work of the CLM was more useful for the Croatian cause.<sup>130</sup> Apart from emigrants from outside the CLM, nor certain individuals within it, according to information from the YSSS, did not consider the cooperation of the CLM with the WACL to be important and satisfactory, claiming that the WACL did nothing for the Croats.<sup>131</sup>

As already mentioned, the YSSS did not follow the activities of the CLM in the WACL with interest, although it concluded that the WACL, APACL and ABN were organizations with exclusively “fascist and neo-fascist features,” and that “some less, some more” operated under the direct influence of the CIA and other intelligence services.<sup>132</sup> The YSSS’s lack of interest in CLM’s activities in the WACL can be interpreted in such a way that it did not pose a security threat, i.e. nothing significant for the YSSS.

On the other hand, the CLM sought a certain benefit in the WACL congresses, which was noted by the YSSS. According to these data, the CLM considered the congresses to be a place of networking with diplomats of those countries that had their embassies in Belgrade, which they tried to use for their own goals.<sup>133</sup> At certain congresses, they also distributed their promotional material, press and books on Croatian political and cultural history, thus trying to familiarize WACL members with the Croatian question.<sup>134</sup> The financial costs for participation in the work of WACL were covered by CLM members from their own funds from the membership fees of their members and organizations, such as the United Croats of Canada. In this way, they regularly and regularly paid the WACL membership fee, and their travel expenses to congresses.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Andrija Ilić, “Hrvatski narodni prvoborac,” *Hrvatska*, August 1976, 1.

<sup>131</sup> HR-HDA-1561-SDS RSUP SRH, 4.1/212, “Hrvatski oslobodilački pokret,” Beograd, November 1, 1983, 11.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Pšeničnik, “Za civilizaciju i napredak, a proti komunizmu,” *Hrvatska*, November 1972, 3; “Hrvatski Oslobodilački Pokret dobio je najveću pobjedu iza 1945. godine,” *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, April/May 1974, 1.

<sup>135</sup> “Hrvati na pozornici svijeta,” *Hrvatska*, May 1975, 3; “Hrvatski Oslobodilački Pokret dobio je najveću pobjedu iza 1945. godine,” *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, April/May 1974, 1; “13. Kongres WACL-a,” *Hrvatska*, September 1980, 1; “XIII. Kongres protukomunističke lige,” *Hrvatska*, December 1980, 4.

## Conclusion

Croatian political emigrants gathered around the CLM used the WACL stage to promote their idea of an independent Croatian state outside the framework of Yugoslavia, which they criticized as a criminal, dictatorial and artificial creation. They demanded that it be broken up into independent states, and they wanted to leave its southeastern part to Bulgaria and Albania. They considered the creation of an independent Croatia, which would be part of a united Europe, as a guarantor of the stability of Southeast Europe, in which they received the unanimous support of the WACL members. They used the congress stage to internationalize issues they considered important to Croats, such as communist post-war crimes, murders of Croatian emigrants, the repression of Croatian Spring protesters, and human rights violations in Yugoslavia. Aware of the good international position of Yugoslavia, they tried to discredit its special kind of national communism, considering it a fraud for the world public, equating it with Soviet-style communism. Yugoslav activity in the NAM was particularly criticized. And the CLM members considered this to be a covert action in favour of world communism, and they considered the Yugoslav advocacy for the right to self-determination of peoples around the world to be hypocritical, while at the same time denying this right to the peoples within Yugoslavia. Yugoslav foreign policy acts towards the key members of the WACL obviously enabled the CLM to better position itself in that organization. A great support for the CLM was the Ukrainian emigration and their representatives in the ABN. Freedom of action in the WACL, although not without problems, was also enabled by the American unofficial policy, which publicly supported the regime in Yugoslavia and its integrity. On the foreign policy front, the CLM members were useful to the United States as allies in the overthrow of communism in the world, and internally valuable voters. Although the CLM considered its activities in the WACL to be successful, the other part of the CPE, especially the one gathered around the then established CNC, ignored these CLM activities. The YSSS behaved in a similar way, which leads to the conclusion that these activities were not considered a threat to the national security of Yugoslavia.

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