



*Routledge Studies in Development, Mobilities and Migration*

# **MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA**

Edited by  
Maria Damilakou and  
Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos



# Migration and Development in Southern Europe and South America

This book explores the linkages between Southern Europe and South America in the post–World War II period, through organized migration and development policies.

In the post-war period, regulated migration was widely considered in the West as a route to development and modernization. Southern European and Latin American countries shared this hegemonic view and adopted similar policies, strategies, and patterns, which also served to promote their integration into the Western bloc. This book showcases how overpopulated Southern European countries viewed emigration as a solution for high unemployment and poverty, whereas huge and underpopulated South American developing countries such as Brazil and Argentina looked at skilled European immigrants as a solution to their deficiencies in qualified human resources. By investigating the transnational dynamics, range, and limitations of the ensuing migration flows between Southern Europe and Southern America during the 1950s and 1960s, this book sheds light on post–World War II migration–development nexus strategies and their impact in the peripheral areas of the Western bloc.

Whereas many migration studies focus on single countries, the impressive scope of this book will make it an invaluable resource for researchers of the history of migration, development, international relations, as well as Southern Europe and South America.

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# Migration and Development in Southern Europe and South America

Edited by Maria Damilakou  
and Yannis G. S. Papadopoulos



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# 9 Cooperation, migration and development

## Yugoslavia and the Southern Cone in the postwar period

*Sara Bernard and Agustin Cosovschi*

### Introduction

This contribution offers new insights into Yugoslav attempts to bolster cooperation with South American countries in the 1950s and 1960s, a topic which remains largely underresearched. It analyses the reasons behind this cooperation, the expected results, and its actual achievements. It also gives special attention to the role of migration in this cooperation. Migration holds a special place in the foreign policies of socialist Yugoslavia: a large number of Yugoslavs abroad were economic migrants, and their support was a valuable asset to socialist Yugoslavia. At the same time, there were doubts about their loyalty to the state, not least because of a considerable number of political émigrés in the Yugoslav diaspora.

South America hosted great numbers of both economic and political migrants. Starting from the late 19th century, South Slavs left the Balkans for South America in great numbers. Until the 1930s, migrants left predominantly for economic reasons and were largely in favour of Yugoslav unity. But starting from the 1930s, migrations to the subcontinent were often politically driven, as both leftist and right-wing political activism radicalised globally. The Yugoslavs who left during and in the aftermath of the Second World War were mostly anti-communists, often also anti-Yugoslav-oriented, and remained active opponents of the country and its government abroad.

Drawing mainly on archival sources, economic press, and technical reports, this contribution investigates Yugoslav policies towards old and new diasporas in the country's pursuit of cooperation in the Southern Cone. It charts changes in migration policies and patterns before and after the communist takeover to explore continuities and changes in the attitudes of the Yugoslav leadership towards its nationals abroad and vice versa. To show the complexity and ambivalence of these relations, it focuses on relations with two countries of the Southern Cone: Chile and Argentina. Home to wealthy Yugoslav colonies which remained largely pro-Yugoslav until the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia in 1991, Chile was also an important foothold for the Yugoslav communist regime due to strong connections with the Chilean Socialist Party since the early 1950s. Conversely, Argentina was the main economic partner

in the region along with Brazil, and the country in which the large majority of Yugoslavs was concentrated. But it was also home to leading Croat émigré organisations, which represented a threat not only to Yugoslav cooperation in the region but to Yugoslav unity as well. Besides exploration of these two case studies, this chapter identifies migration patterns that arose directly out of the forms of cooperation that Yugoslavia managed to establish in the Southern Cone in the early Cold War.

The overall aim of this contribution is therefore to set the ground for further research on the transnational networks linking Yugoslavia and South America in the early post-war period and the role migration played in shaping these networks.

### **The ideological and economic underpinnings of the Yugoslav venture in South America**

Yugoslav interest in South America was part of a shift in the positioning of socialist Yugoslavia in the Cold War. Dismembered and largely destroyed during World War II, Yugoslavia was re-established as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia in 1945. Under the leadership of Marshal Tito, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) secured victory and sided with Moscow. However, divergences on different issues soon emerged, and tensions between Belgrade and Moscow became irreconcilable. In 1948, the KPJ was expelled from the Cominform. After that, Yugoslavia remained a socialist country, but it turned to the United States and Western Europe to secure financial and military support. Faced with the need to legitimise its independent position from the Eastern bloc, while also keeping a certain distance from the West, the Yugoslavs embarked on a mission to extend their network of allies beyond the European world. Thus, they started to develop stronger relations with newly independent countries in Asia and Africa, and with progressive parties and movements in the nascent "Third World". As a result, and in partnership with other anti-imperialist leaders such as Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and Jawaharlal Nehru in India, Yugoslavia would promote some years later the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the Belgrade Conference of 1961.

Socialist Yugoslavia developed an interest in South America already in the 1940s. Belgrade sent three delegations to the region in 1946 and in 1948, the first one led by Ljubo Ilić and charged with re-establishing diplomatic relations with the countries of the region after World War II (Simić 2020b). Three missions followed in 1954, 1958 and 1959 with the aim of encouraging trade and better relations with the countries of the region and developing connections with local progressive parties and movements. By the early 1950s, Belgrade had established diplomatic representations in all the principal South American countries. Agreements in trade and other forms of cooperation were also launched. In some cases, diplomatic relations were established for the first time by the communist leadership (for instance, with Cuba), while in other cases they existed already in the interwar period and were restored after being

interrupted by the war, as in the case of Brazil, Chile, and Argentina. The late 1950s were a period of intense Yugoslav activity in Latin America, with Belgrade constantly increasing its efforts to broaden its network of partners in the region, leading up to Yugoslav foreign minister Koča Popović visiting South America in 1962 in preparation for Tito's visit to Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, and Mexico the following year (Rubinstein 1970: 94–103; Cosovschi 2021).

Yugoslav undertakings in South America were shaped by Belgrade's moderate positions within NAM. Among the five heads of states that founded NAM in 1961, Tito and Nehru soon came to the understanding that conciliation rather than confrontation with the superpowers was the path NAM should take (Rubinstein 1970: 100, 101; Jakovina 2011). Neutrality had broad consensus in the Yugoslav diplomatic body (Jazić 2011: 91–93; Mates 1970: Chapter 3) and was praised by the West, which saw Yugoslavia as an ally in international negotiations on West–South relations (Zaccaria 2016: 13, 36, 48, 69). On account of its moderate positions in NAM and its independence from the Soviet bloc, the integrity of the Yugoslav federation, to which Tito was committed, was a priority for the West. For that same reason, the initial sympathy, or even support, that the Yugoslav political emigration enjoyed in many Western countries faded away in the 1950s (Molnar 2018: chapters 1 and 2; Tokić 2020: 29–34).

It was precisely Belgrade's conciliatory approach which rapidly became the bone of contention between Yugoslavia and a key actor in the development of Latin American Cold War politics: revolutionary Cuba. Yugoslavia was swift to recognise the success of the Cuban revolution. Diplomatic relations with Havana were established in 1960, and several protocols were signed for cooperation in sectors such as trade, education, science and culture (Pantelić & Jončić 2013). But relations became rapidly tarnished when Cuban authorities and media started to voice criticisms of Yugoslav socialism and even accused the Yugoslavs of revisionism. The conflict between Belgrade and Havana would only become more intense in following years: Cuba was the only Latin American country to participate in the first NAM Conference as a full member, and it would constantly push against Yugoslav conciliatory positions over the years, attempting to impose more radical and anti-American stances on the movement and pushing for NAM's rapprochement with the socialist bloc. Havana's radicalism and its active involvement in "Third World" struggles would render it a direct competitor to Yugoslavia, which led to growing tensions within NAM (Jakovina 2011: Chapter 4). This also had an impact on Yugoslav policies in Latin America, as Castro's regime became a symbol of revolutionary zeal and anti-imperialism, while Yugoslavia's more conciliatory policies lost ground and were often the object of criticism by local communist parties following Moscow's guide.

Latin American perceptions of Yugoslavia were often entangled in the dynamics of local politics. In Chile, for instance, Tito's policies were often defended by the Socialists and condemned by the Communists, who were allies in a common front in the late 1950s but remained divided over significant theoretical and political issues (Casals 2010). Chilean socialists fostered strong

relations with Belgrade, with socialist intellectual Oscar Weiss even writing a book in praise of Yugoslav socialism in his 1955 travel journal *Amanecer en Belgrado*, and with the Socialist Party's publishing house editing Spanish versions of Yugoslav propaganda materials. In turn, the Communist Party of Chile would often attack Yugoslav positions, even publishing a book entitled *El problema Yugoslavo*, which accused Yugoslavia of revisionism.<sup>1</sup> Thus, from the mid-1960s onwards, Yugoslav actions in the region faced a growingly difficult environment. Although the 1970s saw a strong commitment to NAM in Latin America with the inclusion of countries such as Chile and Peru, the increasing radicalization of politics in the region and the wave of military repression that was unleashed on the continent after Augusto Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973 significantly reduced Belgrade's ability to extend its influence.

However, it would not be accurate to say that Yugoslav endeavours in South America were without results, nor that Yugoslav moderate positions in NAM curtailed all Yugoslav ambitions in the region. All these challenges notwithstanding, Yugoslav socialism was followed with great interest and inspired several left-wing and nationalist movements and leaders over the years (Bockman 2019; Cosovschi 2021). Moreover, as argued by several scholars of Yugoslav foreign policy, Yugoslavia understood pragmatism as best suited to safeguard Yugoslav national interests. Nonalignment should be primarily seen as functional to Yugoslavia's domestic economic and political needs, mostly with the aim of ending Yugoslavia's isolation after 1948 and affording it an important international role (Dimić 2018; Jakovina 2011; Rubinstein 1970). Hence, although political moderation effectively imposed limitations on Belgrade's political activities in the region, it also allowed for a wider margin of action in the face of rising anti-communism in Latin America and best suited Yugoslav economic interests in the region.

Although political alliances and economic cooperation were connected, sources suggest that political compromises were often made to secure economic gains. Pressing economic needs might explain this approach. Yugoslavia sought to address the dramatic rise of its deficit in the balance of payments, largely due to its trade with Western European countries (Zaccaria 2016: 73–97; Dyker 1990: chapter 5). Trade with the Global South could help alleviate these needs, and in the case of Yugoslavia and South America, Yugoslav moderation could prove instrumental to expanding trade with the two major markets in South America, Brazil and Argentina, which covered 80% of all Yugoslav trade in the region (Rubinstein 1970: 94). During most of the period and since 1964, Brazil was under military administration, while Argentina experienced shifts of democratic governments and anti-communist dictatorships.

These developments came along with a strong influence of Washington in regional politics, which made Yugoslav moderation all the more suitable. The case of Yugoslav relations with Brazil is telling: after several years of failed attempts to increase cooperation in the 1950s, relations significantly improved during the years of Juscelino Kubitschek, Janio Quadros, and left-wing leader Joao Goulart between 1959 and 1964, with a new agreement in 1961 that

insured regular trade with Brazil for five years to amount to approximately \$240 million in both directions (Teodosić 2019: 24, 25). Both countries agreed to rely on their complementarity and to cooperate economically for the best mutual interest, as well as to further develop programmes of industrial cooperation and specialisation and to optimise strategies of joint appearance in Third World markets. But after the 1964 coup in Brazil, the anti-communist stance of the military administration and close relations with Washington temporarily ended friendly relations with Yugoslavia. Cooperation resumed only in 1967, especially in the economic domain and in the framework of UNCTAD and NAM (Ibid: 26, 27).

Did Yugoslavia succeed in bolstering its economic development thanks to cooperation in Latin America? The available data suggests the response is mixed. Overall economic cooperation and trade between Yugoslavia and South America increased in the 1950s and 1960s and remained relevant afterwards, although not as much as Yugoslavia hoped (Cosovschi 2021; Rubinstein 1970: 95, 96). Trade with Latin America rose substantially during the 1960s, going from \$25 million to \$62 million in 1969. Yet, Latin America's importance for Yugoslav foreign trade remained considerably low compared with Africa, and even more so when compared with Asia (Popović 1970). That being said, statistical data on trade might underestimate the extent of the economic cooperation and exchange between South America and Yugoslavia, as it does not account for indirect sources of economic cooperation which might have been very important in the long run. For example, South America was home to a number of enterprises which were owned or run by Yugoslavs or descendants of Yugoslav settlers in the region. New Yugoslav enterprises such as Enegoprojekt and Enegoinvest opened branches and established joint ventures in Latin American countries. Professional football was another sector in which Yugoslav–South American connections were relevant (with Brazil, for example). It is likely that part of the revenues of these businesses returned to Yugoslavia in different forms. More broadly, there are little data on the amount of remittances which Yugoslav migrants and settlers in South America sent to Yugoslavia or saved in Yugoslav bank accounts. Available sources suggest that saving and investing money and sending remittances was already widespread in the 1920s. This was followed with great interest by Yugoslav state authorities, postal services, and the bank sector, which saw in migrant savings opportunities for lucrative business opportunities (Miletić 2012: 133–136).<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, little research and data are available on remittances sent by Yugoslavs from the Americas after the Second World War. Changes in migration patterns between Yugoslavia and South America suggest that during socialism, remittances sent by Yugoslavs from the region were inferior to those sent from Western Europe, where a great number of Yugoslav workers found employment from the early 1960s. On the one hand, the emigration in the post-war era to South America was largely political, and it is unlikely that political émigrés sent money to Yugoslavia as they left no family members behind. If they did send it, this was probably through unofficial channels and to support



the political opposition or political actions against the Yugoslav federal system, as happened in the late 1980s and 1990s, when overseas diasporas financed national leaders in their path towards independence from the Yugoslav federation (Hockenos 2003). However, South America's diasporas remained in size and engagement far behind sister organisations in the United States (Đikanović 2012; Miletić 2012: 81).

Yet, Yugoslav cooperation with South America was also shaped by immigration to Yugoslavia, which was sponsored and established by the socialist state. This consisted in the repatriation of Yugoslavs who were forced to leave during the Second World War or left before that. Many of those returnees were shipped back from the Americas. Their return was meant to legitimise socialist Yugoslavia beyond its national borders and to reconnect with the Yugoslav diasporas, so as to gain support for socialism and Yugoslav unity. In addition, a number of students and workers from the Global South came to socialist Yugoslavia for training and study. These mobilities were sponsored by the state and were part of Yugoslav policies to promote technical and economic cooperation with the Global South. Although it is difficult to assess the impact of return migration and of the "socialist" mobilities on Yugoslav economic development, they certainly contributed to building Yugoslavia's international prestige and to consolidating its soft power in the "Third World".

### **Following migration patterns: the Yugoslav communities of Chile and Argentina**

Yugoslav emigration to South America dated back to the 1870s and was mostly economically driven. The triggers were the crisis of shipbuilding and of winemaking, and population growth, which led to massive unemployment. Most migrants came from the coastal areas of Dalmatia and from Slavonia, then part of the Habsburg Empire, while the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro endorsed restricted migration policies and provided fewer migrants. In 1928, there were about 150,000 Yugoslav migrants throughout South America, mostly concentrated in southern Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay (Antić 1988a). After reaching a halt during the First World War, emigration to the region resumed in the 1920s when visa restrictions were introduced in the United States, Canada, and Australia (Miletić 2012: 145, 146). Numbers sharply declined again in the 1930s when the Great Depression interrupted emigration to the Americas and return migration intensified. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav presence in the region remained strong. Sources suggest, for instance, that, in the late 1930s, there were about 150,000 Yugoslavs of Croat ethnicity in Argentina alone (Simić 2020a: 792).

Emigration heavily shaped diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and South American countries. The first Yugoslav diplomatic bodies were established where emigration was concentrated: Argentina (1922), Chile (1935), and Brazil (1938). The support of the Yugoslav communities in South America to the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (1918) first,

and to its transformation into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929) later, was of crucial importance for the Yugoslav political elite, not least because Yugoslavia had very poor knowledge and expertise on the American subcontinent. To secure the economic and political support of Yugoslavs overseas and to curb the spread of anti-Yugoslav ideas among them, interwar Yugoslavia invested many resources to create a Yugoslav transnational community which encompassed Yugoslavs in the homeland and overseas in one single transterritorial entity (Brunnbauer 2012). For example, expenditure for the opening of diplomatic representatives and cultural associations, as well as distribution of cultural material (propaganda), expanded greatly.

In many ways, the migration policies of socialist Yugoslavia towards its diasporas were in continuity with those of interwar Yugoslavia (Brunnbauer 2016: 259, 269). Much like interwar Yugoslavia, socialist Yugoslavia continued to perceive Yugoslavs abroad as an integral part of the Yugoslav national community. Fear of the activities of anti-Yugoslav émigrés abroad, as well as attempts to secure the flow of remittances to Yugoslavia, were common to both interwar and socialist Yugoslavia. Yet, important discontinuities exist too. Overall, migration patterns to South America and the relations between Yugoslavia and South American countries changed significantly, and they assumed a much greater strategic role for socialist Yugoslavia than they ever had for interwar Yugoslavia.

To begin with, the importance of South America in the Yugoslav worldview changed substantially. While in the interwar period Yugoslavia had mainly European ambitions, socialist Yugoslavia aspired to become a global player. This made relations with South American countries not only economically but also politically relevant. Second, for a country that built its legitimacy on notions of socialism and class belonging, the nature and pattern of emigration to South America before the Second World War was ideologically favourable: many of the migrants of Yugoslav origin who left for the Americas in the early 20th century found employment in industry, which was expanding in this period, and the fluidity of South Slav national identities conflated well with socialist ideals and with support for the creation of Yugoslavia in 1918 (Brunnbauer 2016: 107). Socialist ideas and support to Yugoslav unity were stronger among Yugoslavs in the United States (where migrants' employment in the industrial sector dominated earlier), but strongholds were present in South America too. In Antofagasta (Chile), the first newspaper in the Americas named after Yugoslavia was published in 1915. In 1912, Valparaiso (Chile) became a centre for the collection of help and resources for the Red Cross of Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria, while Rosario (Argentina) was the set of the main support committee for Serbian and Montenegrin soldiers at the warfront (Perić 2005: 74–76). In Bolivia, several scattered communities joined the effort to support the creation of Yugoslavia. This network would be rebuilt during the Second World War and supported Tito's partisans (Antić 1986).

Third, Yugoslav post-war emigration to South America was largely political. During the socialist period, the Ustasha movement, a fascist and ultra-nationalist

movement, and Croatian separatists more broadly, would constitute the most dangerous political organisation in the diaspora, having important operational bases in South America. During the Second World War, the Ustasha governed the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), the puppet state established by Hitler and Mussolini in occupied Yugoslavia. The Ustasha presence in South America dated back to the 1930s when the Croatian Home Guard (the paramilitary organisation of the Croatian separatist forces, disbanded in 1928) was re-established in Buenos Aires in 1931 (Tokić 2020: 28, 29). The fervent anti-communism and Catholicism shared by Croatian separatists and the conservative governments of the Argentine “Infamous Decade” provided a basis for mutual support and cooperation. In the aftermath of World War II, many leading figures of the Ustasha movement took refuge in Argentina, such as the *poglavnik* Ante Pavelić, as well as Vinko Nikolić and Antun Bonifačić who relaunched *Hrvatska Revija* (*Croatian Review*), a popular quarterly among Croats abroad which was banned by the Yugoslav communists in 1945 (Grba 2019; Jandrić 2003: 449–453). Leading figures of Serbian conservatism such as the former Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović also settled in Buenos Aires (Tokić 2020: 43), making Argentina an important centre for Yugoslav anti-communist activities abroad.

The Yugoslav leadership was highly concerned about these developments. According to the Yugoslav ambassador in Buenos Aires, Slavoljub Petrović, Tito explicitly charged him with preventing the activities of the Ustasha emigration from hindering the development of good relations with the Argentine government (Petrović 2007: 160, 161). Moreover, the Yugoslav leadership feared that anti-Yugoslav propaganda could gain support among Yugoslav workers in South America, especially in Argentina, where political emigrants were hosted by the local authorities and provided legal protection and support to their activities (Simić 2020b). Yet, partly the risks of the spread of anti-Yugoslav ideas among Yugoslav communities in South America intensified as a result of the grandiose programme of repatriation, which the communist regime launched after the end of the war (Brunnbauer 2016: 266, 267; Hofgräff & Selnik 2021: 105–108; Šegvić 1958). As those who made their way back to Yugoslavia were the most loyal supporters of Tito’s Yugoslavia overseas, their return deprived Yugoslavia of its most important allies to fight against political emigrants. This was in particular the case of Argentina. According to available data, South America contributed about 10% of the total returns sponsored by the state, which took place between 1945 and 1951. Argentina recorded one of the highest numbers of returns. With its 1,748 returnees, it was second only to France (3,914). In terms of nationality, the large majority of returnees were Croats (52%) followed by Slovenes (27.5%) and Serbs (10%) (Simić 2020a: 793).

Yet, Croats were not only political opponents of interwar and socialist Yugoslavia. Although Croatian national identity often entered into conflict with Yugoslav and socialist ideas, many Croats were also at the forefront of political support for Yugoslavism. Argentina and Chile provide an interesting contrast here. In both countries Croat nationals were overrepresented, but while

Argentina became one of the most important centres of Croatian separatism in the post-war period, the Croat communities of Chile were largely pro-Yugoslav and, to a large extent, remained so until 1991 (Martinić 2002). Antofagasta (Chile) would even become one of the centres of Yugoslavism in South America. While there are many possible explanations for this contrast, the diverse geographic provenience and the class belonging of Croat migrants in Chile and in Argentina are useful categories of analysis here, as they played a major role in shaping migrants' relations with the Yugoslav state. For instance, Croats who left for Argentina came from different parts of the Habsburg Empire. Although all classes were represented, the large majority of first settlers were low-class peasants whose political party, the Croat Peasant Party, was against cooperation with Serbia for Yugoslav unity but in favour of a Croat nation-state within the Habsburg Empire. Class and political divisions within the Yugoslav communities in Argentina did strengthen as a result of the migration experience due to poor opportunities for social mobility offered to migrant workers, with the exception of the shipping sector, in which only a minor part of migrants of Yugoslav origin were employed.

Conversely, the progressive reforms implemented in the Chilean economy in the early 20th century offered stable jobs and opportunities for social mobility to migrant workers. Migrants of Yugoslav origin who could sustain the costs of the longer journey to Chile were usually better off and were a relatively more homogenous group than the much more numerous Croats directed to Argentina. Their large majority came from Dalmatia, where the idea of Yugoslav unity received great support among Croat intellectuals and politicians who promoted cooperation with the Kingdom of Serbia in the early 20th century and became part of the first Yugoslav government. Furthermore, the production of nitrate in Chile, which grew considerably in the early decades of the 20th century, benefited Croatian settlers who invested in this sector and became the founders of the Yugoslav Bank in Punta Arenas and branches in Valparaiso and Antofagasta, the first economic institution with "Yugoslavia" in its name (Perić Kaselj 2016: 252). Finally, Chile remained a fairly progressive country in the interwar period, with an important reform of agriculture in the late 1920s that aimed to improve productivity and to favour the establishment of agricultural colonies. Within this reformative process, migrants were offered the same legal rights as indigenous workers with the aim of facilitating the acquisition of plots by migrant workers (Rector 2003: chapter 6).<sup>3</sup>

Although class divisions and struggles existed in the Chilean Croat communities already during World War I (Antić 1988b), and despite the fact that successful economic integration was not always linked to support to and/or from the Yugoslav state (see, for instance, the case of Bolivia: Rajković 2015),<sup>4</sup> the wealth generated by the Chilean Yugoslav community and the positive relation it enjoyed with the communist regime might have contributed to the popularity of Yugoslav ideas in the Chilean political spectrum, with important figures of different sectors of Chilean politics coming from a Yugoslav background, as in the case of Christian Democrat Radomiro Tomic Romero or socialist

Pedro Vuskovic. Yet, some sources suggest that this pro-Yugoslav orientation was not total, nor should it be taken as a sign of a generalized left-wing trend within the Yugoslav diaspora. For instance, during a joint visit to Yugoslavia in 1963, socialist Raul Ampuero and communist Victor Contreras, both elected senators for the province of Antofagasta, declared that the Yugoslav community in Chile was “mostly right-wing” with a tendency to support Radicals and Liberals or “Christian Democrats in the best of cases”, and they did not hesitate to interpret this conservative political orientation as a result of their class belonging.<sup>5</sup>

### **Socialist mobilities from South America to Yugoslavia: a preliminary assessment**

During the socialist period, new forms of mobility developed that brought South Americans to Yugoslav soil through various forms of academic and political exchange. Even though not necessarily tied to the classical patterns of migration between these regions, socialist mobilities (re)shaped connections between these distant geographies in many different ways which remain largely uncharted. The aim of this section is to offer a preliminary assessment on the rise and development of these mobilities within Yugoslav–South American relations on the basis of available studies and sources.

Following a trend which involved countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain, socialist Yugoslavia developed an interest in attracting international students from the 1950s onwards. Although recent scholarship suggests that already in the late 1960s, logics of profit became an important component of the internationalisation of Yugoslav higher education (Wright 2021) and led to an important reduction in the number of scholarships offered. The logic of solidarity which underpinned these programmes in the 1950s and early 1960s at least, was one important tool used by socialist Yugoslavia in its endeavour to consolidate its soft power in the “Third World”. The Yugoslav state promoted student and worker mobility programmes targeting countries in the Global South with two main goals: to assist recently decolonized countries to staff themselves with technical cadres, and to ensure privileged relations with the countries of origin, as the cadres trained and educated in Yugoslavia would assume positions of power once they returned home.<sup>6</sup> Hence, scholarships were offered to students to come to Yugoslavia for short periods of study, for acquiring a degree or a qualification in higher education. In the early 1950s applicants and beneficiaries of scholarships were almost exclusively students from Western European countries. But, by the late 1950s, the number of students and their nationalities had expanded greatly: while 23 students from seven different countries were enrolled in full-time studies in the academic year 1952–1953 in Yugoslav universities, by 1958–1959 they accounted for 249 students from 42 different countries, with students from Third World countries, and from Africa in particular, increasing considerably (Baker 2018: 59).

The presence of students from Latin America in socialist Yugoslavia was much smaller than numbers from the Middle East, Asia and Africa. For example, according to data of the Yugoslav Association of Students, in 1964, a total of 912 students received a scholarship to enrol in full-time studies (first or second year of study). Of those students, 348 were from Africa, 322 from Arabic countries, 131 from Asia, 83 from Latin America, 20 from European countries, and 8 from the United States, Canada, and Australia.<sup>7</sup> Although the total number of scholarships granted to South American countries was lower also in the previous and following years, their distribution by country changed every year, making it difficult to speculate about their contribution to any specific Yugoslav strategy in South America. For example, in the period 1958–1966, the largest number of scholarships in Latin America were given to Chile and Bolivia,<sup>8</sup> which might be the result of the manifold political, economic, and cultural connections with Chile and the general need for technical cadre in revolutionary Bolivia.

Further research will be needed to verify these hypotheses and provide a fuller picture of the trends and role of scholarships in these relations. Yet, a curious aspect which emerges in the records of the Yugoslav Association of Students is that, although it was one of the smallest societies of students, the society of students from Latin America was reported to be one of the most active, but also internally divided, in the early 1960s.<sup>9</sup> Whether and how these developments were reasons of concern for the Yugoslav authorities does not emerge in the sources consulted. More broadly, the impact of international students on any aspect of Yugoslav youth culture and society remains unknown.

Finally, in the context of rising left-wing internationalism and as a result of the manifold political connections developed throughout the 1950s, Yugoslavia also became a frequent destination for many on the Latin American Left. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, left-wing and nationalist leaders, intellectuals, and militants came to Yugoslavia to familiarize themselves with the particulars of Yugoslav socialism, and among the many figures that visited the country during those decades were Bolivian former president Victor Paz Estenssoro, Argentine Marxist intellectual Silvio Frondizi, and Chilean socialist leaders Raúl Ampuero, Salomón Corbalán, and Salvador Allende (Cosovschi in press). In the early decades of the Cold War, these networks allowed for various forms of travel meant for political exchange and education. But they would also prove useful following the wave of military repression that swept over Latin America in the 1970s. As a result of violence targeting left-wing militants, many South American militants would take refuge in Yugoslavia under the sponsorship of Belgrade. Sources for these mobilities are still to be explored, but some initial hints suggest that connections with Chile were again of special importance here. For instance, a report from 1974 written by Luis Jérez Ramirez, representative of the Chilean Socialist Party in exile in Yugoslavia, describes the situation of more than 40 Chilean exiles who took refuge in Yugoslavia after Pinochet's coup in September 1973. Among them were not only some who had a Yugoslav background, but also many who occupied important positions

in the structures of Chilean socialism, being members of the Central Committee or even part of Salvador Allende's personal guard. In his report, Jérez Ramirez describes the situation of these refugees with some regret, as their integration in Yugoslav society was taking much longer than expected, and their living conditions were still precarious many months after their arrival. But he especially took care to underline that the reason why so many Chilean socialists had demanded refuge there was precisely because of the special bond that they had developed with Yugoslavia over the years.<sup>10</sup>

All in all, we still know little about how socialist mobilities had an impact on the lives and professional trajectories of those who came to Yugoslavia to acquire academic and technical training, or to take refuge from violence and repression unleashed in their own countries. With this very preliminary assessment on the different mobilities promoted by the socialist state, nevertheless, we want to underline the need to explore these important but still neglected topics.

## **Conclusion**

In this exploratory chapter, we have traced some of the main developments and trends in the relations of cooperation between socialist Yugoslavia and South America in the first decades of the Cold War. We have shown how old diasporas and new forms of mobilities, as well as the policies to regulate them, played an important and multifaceted role in shaping Yugoslav–South American relations. As we have seen, although relations with South American countries already existed in the interwar period, socialist Yugoslavia granted a renewed and greater attention to the region due to its ambitious foreign policy vis-à-vis the “Third World”. In this context, the presence of Yugoslav diasporas in the countries of the Southern Cone constituted a double-edged sword. While many of the Yugoslavs who came to the Americas in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as economic migrants supported Tito's Yugoslavia, the anti-communist political emigration that came to the continent following the Communist takeover was considerably active and, more often than not, more efficient and aggressive than the pro-Yugoslav emigration. Yet the relation of Yugoslavs abroad with the home country was shaped by many diverse factors, as shown by drawing some comparisons between the Yugoslav communities of Chile and Argentina. Finally, we have addressed some forms of political and academic mobility that were characteristic of the context of international solidarity and rising internationalism of the 1950s and 1960s, but also of the violent and radicalized context of the 1970s, which still remain largely underresearched.

## **Notes**

1 AJ 507–Chile–IX, 21/ I, doc. 10, Santiago, September 16, 1959.

2 AJ 784–1–2, examples of advertisement of saving services by Poštanka Stedionica Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Zadrúžna Gospodarska Banka, Jugoslavenska Banka D. D.

- 3 AJ 784–1–6, doc. 217/28, Santiago, November 14, 1928.
- 4 The Marinković family, a pro-Ustasha family that fled Croatia in the mid-1950s, has become one of the most wealthy and powerful families in Bolivia. In 2010, Branko Marinković, a member of this family, was convicted of organizing a coup against the socialist government of Evo Morales. In 2020, Branko Marinković also served as minister in the anti-socialist governments led by Jeanine Áñez.
- 5 AJ 507–Chile–IX, 21/1, doc. 20, Zabeleška u vezi boravka u našoj zemlji čileanskog senatora RAULA AMPUERA, generalnog sekretara Socijalističke partije i VICTORA CONTRERAS, člana CK KP Čilea, 1963, pp. 5, 6.
- 6 AJ 145–32–93, Organizacija i problemi školovanja građana iz zemlja u razvoju, Belgrade, February 20, 1966, p. 6.
- 7 AJ 145–32–90, Stanje i problemi školovanja stranih studenata u Jugoslaviji, p. 3.
- 8 AJ 145–32–90; AJ 145–32–90; 145–32–92; AJ 145–32–93, several statistical reports (1952–1970).
- 9 AJ 145–32–90, Neki problemi školovanja stranih studenata kod nas, p. 6.
- 10 AJ 507–Chile– IX, 21/ II, doc. 158, Izveštaj o situaciji čileanskih političkih izbeglica u Jugoslaviji, Belgrade, September 12, 1974.

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