

Brigitte Le Normand, *Citizens Without Borders: Yugoslavia and Its Migrant Workers in Western Europe*

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In analyzing states' responses to human mobilities, migration studies have long focused on the role played by the states that received migrants. However, scholarship examining governments' outreach toward emigrants has been expanding, and Brigitte Le Normand's book *Citizens Without Borders* falls precisely into this emerging field. Le Normand, a historian of Southeast Europe and a migration scholar at Maastricht University (who previously held a position at the University of British Columbia, Canada), employs new trends in migration research to shed light on how socialist Yugoslavia monitored its emigrant workers, i.e., migrants who, in the official discourse, were referred to as "workers temporarily working abroad."

Exercising transborder policies to engage emigrant "co-nationals" was nothing new in the region—even the state's predecessor, interwar Yugoslavia, devised its diaspora policies. However, labor migration and subsequent governance over migrants made Yugoslavia, in many ways, idiosyncratic among socialist states where the politics of exit were much more restrictive. Building on the existing scholarship, Le Normand persuasively demonstrates that Yugoslavia applied active measures in fostering government outreach toward emigrants. Contrary to previous research, which dealt with the Yugoslav state and the migrants separately, she highlights migrants' agency which enabled them to reinterpret policies targeting them.

Applying the concept of transnational political space, Le Normand shows how multifaceted state-diaspora relations were. Even though a single party ran the state, the state was by no means a compact unit exercising unison policy. To illuminate the complexity of relations, Le Normand brings to light the collision between different levels of administration in deploying policies geared toward "workers temporarily employed abroad." As she emphasizes, not all government bodies advanced the same idea of homeland. Essentially, the categories with which state institutions operated were incredibly fluid and depended on the modes of knowledge production in various state and social enterprises. The diverse ways of producing knowledge on migrations and migrants lie at the heart of Le Normand's analysis.

Therefore, in the first part of her work, she examines how scholars and the Yugoslav cinema perceived migrants. In the second, she pays attention to various modes of diaspora building, covering areas from the media to scholarship and government policies. Yugoslavia's outreach toward the emigrants ranged from radio broadcasts to organized visits to the homeland. Le Normand's portrait of Yugoslav workers abroad is restricted to the Croatian "case," which might sound disappointing. However, given that she justifies this decision by explaining the importance of Croatian emigration, both in quantitative (Croatian emigration was the most numerous) and qualitative terms (the nexus between the emigration and tumultuous national revival in the late 1960s, which challenged Yugoslavia's unity known as the Croatian Spring), her

choice does not distort the understanding of the overall phenomenon. It is, however, beyond a doubt that focusing on some other republic or trying to display the interplay between different ethnic groups would result in a different image. However, the set of problems she aims to address has a general relevance and could be applied to other case studies.

In the first chapter, Le Normand explains how the notion of governing migrants the same way the country controlled workers on Yugoslav grounds was contested by the media and migrants themselves. Many migrants shared distrust toward the Yugoslav government, as also exemplified in their reluctance to participate in the interviews conducted by the Zagreb-based Institute for Migrations in its survey "Yugoslavia in the European Labor Migration." The scholars stressed that migrants were becoming alienated from the Yugoslav "homeland" and were convinced that the federal system functioned at the expense of Croatia, which was particularly evident during the Croatian Spring.

Feelings of emigrant alienation also resonated in the Yugoslav cinema, which depicted the controversies of Yugoslav modernization by recording the labor migration. According to the Yugoslav film, labor migration embodied contradictions of the Yugoslav system, namely its failure to develop the countryside on the road to progress. By analyzing 30 films recorded from 1968 to 1984, Le Normand argues that film directors essentially adopted stereotypical images reminiscent of those used by social scientists and the official discourse, particularly one advanced during the Croatian Spring. Hence, they portrayed the migrants as male workers (despite the fact that, as Le Normand argues, one-third of migrants were women) from rural backgrounds who were forced to flee abroad.

Contrary to the film, which displayed migrants as powerless subjects in the hands of external forces, the radio program encouraged their agency. In the following chapter, Le Normand analyzes the radio broadcast *To Our Citizens in the World* (Našim građanima u svijetu), run by the Croatian public radio, which allowed migrants to share their experiences of life abroad. Like the Yugoslav state itself, Le Normand argues, the program was a hybrid between socialist mobilization and Western appeal for popular music. The broadcast, which distanced itself from politics to embrace the everyday life of migrants, welcomed active cooperation, also in the form of letter writing to the program editors. In a way, as migrants discussed issues linked to passports, visas, and the import of goods to Yugoslavia, the program proved to substitute consular infrastructure. The idea of homeland promoted by the broadcast was deliberately loose enough so that anybody could insert their wishes and expectations into it.

Whereas the radio program targeted the Yugoslav public in its entirety, the press was a more differentiated endeavor, with newspapers that were published on a regional or local level. One of them was *Imotska krajina*, which referred exclusively to the population from the Dalmatian hinterland. The town of Imotski and its surroundings were both places with a tradition of emigration and hotbeds of

Croatian nationalism. By creating a transnational, national public sphere, *Imotska krajina* enabled migrants to communicate their experiences and perpetuate an essentially localized identity. The fact that the paper was written in the dialect facilitated the continuation of localized feelings. Only during the Croatian Spring did the nationalist narrative undermine the regional one.

To foster unity and combat the “corrosive” influence of Western capitalism, Yugoslav authorities encouraged migrants to join workers’ associations. These societies formed part of the Yugoslav web of transnational governance, and the state used them to “outsource” the work carried out by the diplomatic infrastructure. While these associations were seemingly democratic, they were, in fact, controlled by the Yugoslav party, which also stimulated politically active migrants to participate fully. Reflecting on associations’ autonomy, Le Normand concludes that as civil society was circumscribed in Yugoslavia, associations operated in a clientelistic fashion and were thus state-dependent entities. The Yugoslav state perceived them as mediators between “crisis-ridden” migrant families and Yugoslavia.

Given that the state perceived the stay abroad as temporary and viewed life in the capitalist West with unease, it adopted various measures to encourage migrants’ return. The survey, conducted by the Institute of Migrations in Zagreb in 1970–1971, was also aimed at inducing migrants’ comeback. One of the core questions in this open-ended survey concerned the conditions under which migrants would be eager to return. Contrary to what was expected, migrants subverted and appropriated the questionnaire, expressing not only their attitudes but also their feelings of resentment and anger toward the authorities. Under the impression of Croatian Spring, they tried to link their personal experience to what they saw as the oppression of Croatia at the hands of Yugoslavia. Despite the convincing narrative of the Croatian Spring, however, migrants’ decision to return was most often associated with practical concerns related to work and residence.

The fact that many children of migrants were born and raised abroad made Yugoslav authorities aware of the need to institutionalize the transnational education system. Highlighting the functioning of the education system, Le Normand stresses that the goal set by the main body covering education abroad aimed to reintegrate migrants back into Yugoslav society rather than helping them to assimilate into the adoptive countries. While individual republics essentially regulated education, education was also coordinated by the federal body, which displayed concern that migrants would cease speaking the “Yugoslav language.” As Le Normand explains, education programs depended on bilateral agreements and thus varied greatly between different countries of immigration.

The last chapter analyzes how the education system functioned in practice. Contrary to popular representations of Yugoslavia’s sway over emigrant communities, Le Normand shows that many teachers were often at odds with the Yugoslav authorities, voicing their complaints about the inadequacy of education and low salaries, among others. The role the state assigned them was significant: they were

not only expected to give classes but also to guide emigrant social activities. In effect, their task was to strengthen ties with the Yugoslav homeland, a duty which was most vividly carried out by organizing school visits to Yugoslavia. Visits were fully programmed, engaging Yugoslavia's local and governmental administration as well as companies and families that hosted the migrants' children. By "feeling the breath of homeland," emigrant children could not only confirm their "Yugoslav" identity but were also encouraged to speak on behalf of their "homeland" abroad.

Visits to the homeland were one of many means of promoting attachment to Yugoslavia. As Le Normand demonstrates, the ways Yugoslavia fostered loyalty were multifaceted, involving different administrative levels and agencies. Probably one of the more important contributions of the book to our understanding of Yugoslav labor migration is the complex web of relations that emerged between Yugoslavia and its "workers temporarily abroad." Moreover, her book is innovative in adding migrants themselves to the often simplistic equation of state-diaspora relations. Within the transnational political space, as Le Normand explains, migrants not only responded to government initiatives, but they also aimed at engaging their Yugoslav homeland and taking an active part in its diaspora programs. While the book is limited to exploring the case of Yugoslav labor migration, its implications could be broadened in contextualizing socialist Yugoslavia's migrations in the twentieth century. In many ways, the second Yugoslavia continued diaspora policies set in motion already by the state known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Examining both Yugoslavias and setting them in the comparative European framework would be thus undoubtedly welcome. Le Normand's book could serve here not only to facilitate an understanding of Yugoslavia's labor migration but also as a methodological tool for analyzing state-diaspora relations.

Miha Zobec