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*From Refugees to Emigrants - Political Refugees from Inform bloc Countries in
Organized Emigration of Jews from Yugoslavia to Israel (1948-1952)*

Summary

The influxes of political refugees from neighboring Cominform countries, resulting from the Yugoslav-Soviet conflict and the organized emigration of Yugoslav Jews to Israel were two migration movements that were parallel. However, among the illegal immigrants from the Eastern Bloc countries trying to make their way to Yugoslavia there were also Jews aspiring to join the mass migration movement of Yugoslav Jews in order to reach new country in the Near East. Consequently, a small, but significant continuity between the two essentially parallel migration movements was established.

As this process was not articulated by any guideline of cooperation between the Yugoslavia and Israel, respectfully Yugoslav Authorities and neighboring countries of the Eastern Block, the only documents relevant to the participation of Cominform refugees in the organized emigration were sporadic memos exchanged between the Federation of Jewish Religious Communities and the local Jewish communities in Yugoslavia. General framework of overlapping of two migration processes was therefore retraced owing to the individual cases of emigrants coming from the Eastern Bloc Countries.

Inclusion of foreign citizens into organized emigration was conditioned by submission of valid passport and corresponding permission obtained from the mother country authorities. Regarding this matter status of the emigrants coming from the Cominform countries evidently should be precedent. This was primarily the matter of administrative context accompanied with their emigration. Whilst other illegal newcomers coming from neighboring Eastern European Countries at the time, had been immediately repatriated, Jews were allowed to stay in Yugoslavia and, in some cases, even proceed to travel further. Position of competent state institutions remained skeptical, what is confirmed by irrelevant number of those refugees who had left country within organized emigration and managed to get to Israel.

The Federation of Jewish Religious Communities, in helping newcomers from the countries of the Eastern Block, assumed once more the role it had already played in the transit of Jewish refugees across Yugoslav state territory in the period between the wars respectfully in the period just before the end of the Second World War. Every individual attempt to use the Yugoslav government's policy of free emigration to make it to the new country of Jewish people was soundly supported. Anyhow, it is impossible to define it with certainty whether the Central Organization of Yugoslav Jews could have contributed to the positive solution of individual requests for emigration where final decision was made by The Ministry of Interior.

General Context that emigrants could join in organized emigration from Yugoslavia to Israel for individuals, who had come illegally from Cominform countries, was completely irrelevant.

Led by desire to reach newly founded Jewish state at the Near East or to leave the Eastern Bloc, transit over Yugoslav territory considered only as an instrument that led them to the desired goal.