

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN CROATIA FROM 1945 TO 1991

SOCIAL CAUSALITY OF THE DISSENT BETWEEN COMMUNIST AUTHORITIES AND RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES' LEADERSHIP

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The conflict between the Yugoslav Communists and religious communities did not emerge in 1945; it has its origins in earlier periods. From the beginning, the communist and Christian doctrines were sharply opposed, in spite of apparent agreement in principles of social justice and brotherhood of men.¹ The Catholic Church rendered its opinion on Communism in the encyclical letter *Divini Redemptoris (Divine Redemption)*, when the Pope Pius XI judged Communism as essentially evil and issued a stern warning that any defender of civil society should not aid it.² The Krk's bishop Josip Srebrnić³, in the Lenten Epistle to the believers in 1940, emphasized the peril of Communism: "...you must serve the collective, and do and think what the collective asks for! No freedom! No house of your own! No land or vineyard of your own! No family! An individual should not have a mind or will of his own! Never has such a violence made a man into a slave, as we see it in Communism!"⁴ The Orthodox press also deemed Communism the utmost danger.⁵ On the other hand, the Communists regarded the clergy and monastic vocation useless,

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¹ *Komunizam i kršćani* (Zagreb, 1937) 112-113; Vendelin Vasilj, *Komunizam i vjera* (Chicago: Croatian Franciscan Press, 1950). One review (Moderna socijalna knjižnica – MOSK; Modern Social Library) continuously urged its readers to reject the capitalists, Freemasonry and Marxists.

² Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945.-1991.* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2006) Chapter 1 "Katolička crkva i komunisti"; Giulio Girardi, *Kršćanska vjera i historijski materijalizam* (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1986) 13.

³ Josip Srebrnić (born in Solkan in 1876, died in Krk in 1966). From 1923 he was the bishop of Krk. Srebrnić was a Slovenian, but in the period, which is the subject of this research, he signed his name as Srebrnić. Therefore, this latter term will be used.

⁴ Anto Gavrić, "Hrvatski biskupi o gospodarstvu i razvoju", *Glas Koncila* 10, (7. 03. 2004.)

⁵ "Sumorne teze u obliku apela Crkvi", *Hrišćanska misao* (November 1939), 137-139.

religion detrimental and the believers public menace and ill fortune of the collective.⁶ Consequently, political and social engagement of the Christians was practically impossible in the Communist society, even if their Christian beliefs would have been excluded from the public sphere. The possibility of the revolutionary engagement of part of the clergy and laymen therefore became suspicious to the Communists and impermissible to the higher levels of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

In spite of certain similarities in methods of authority in all Communist regimes, the Yugoslav case was unique. It did not have anything in common with the similar cases of the so - called *The Second World* countries and it differed from the one being in the first country of socialism, The Soviet Union, which persecuted the religious communities in more congruent and zealous manner.⁷

The history of conflicts

As early as 1930s the Communist movement replaced the idea of dissolution of Yugoslavia, being the bourgeois formation, with the idea of Yugoslav federation.⁸ Thus, during the war, the Communists grew into the strongest pro - Yugoslav force. The Catholics and the Muslims were in most cases privileged in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH – *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*) from 1941 to 1945⁹ and the Orthodox, privileged in the first Yugoslavia,¹⁰ were

⁶ Marc Gjidara, "Pravni vidici vjerske slobode u totalitarnim režimima 1945.-1989." *Obnovljeni život*, 1-2 (1996) 168-169; Jakov Jukić, *Religija u modernom industrijskom društvu* (Split: Crkva u svijetu, 1973) 39.

⁷ On the relations between the Communist authorities and the Orthodox Churches see also: Timothy Ware, *Pravoslavna crkva* (Zagreb: Prosvjeta, 2005) 103-136.

⁸ Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1999) 113 and alike.

⁹ See: Jure Krišto, *Katolička crkva i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941.-1945.*, vol. I, II. (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, Dom i svijet, 1998); Hrvoje Matković, *Povijest Nezavisne Države Hrvatske* (Zagreb: P.I.P. Pavičić, 2002); Bogdan Krizman, *Ante Pavelić i ustaše* (Zagreb: Globus, 1986); Bogdan Krizman, *Pavelić između Hitlera i Mussolinija* (Zagreb: Globus, 1980); Bogdan Krizman, *Pavelić u bjekstvu* (Zagreb, Globus, 1986); Fikreta Jelić - Butić, *Ustaše i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941-1945.* (Zagreb: Globus, 1977); Ljubo Boban, *Kontroverze iz povijesti Jugoslavije : dokumentima i polemikom o temama iz novije povijesti Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, Stvarnost, 1987-1990); Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945. Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians from 1918 to 1929 or the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929 to 1941 (further the first Yugoslavia). During the interwar period the serbian Orthodox Church (Srpska pravoslavna crkva, further SPC) built 370 new churches, 129 chapels, 15 monasteries, many parochial homes, bell – towers and monasterial shelters on the territory of Yugoslavia. The churches were sometimes built in the Catholic homogeneous areas, for example in Čakovac, Ljubljana, Sušak, some islands and alike. See: Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.* vol. 1 (Beograd: 2002) 28; from the budget for 1927/28 SPC got 68 773 025 dinars from the State and the Catholic Church got 34 751 293 dinars. The correlation of the numbers of the believers was 42% of the Orthodox in relation to 38% of the Catholics. Compare with: "Katolička Crkva u Državnom proračunu", *Vrhbosna* 40 (1926) 12, 207.

mainly persecuted in NDH. Although not quite unconditionally, the Catholic Church gave support to the establishing of the Croatian state which “had, to a large extent, institutionalised the Catholicism, as a state religion, as well as a cohesive power”.¹¹ During the war, the Orthodox Church was divided into nationalists prone to the Chetnik movement – partly because of their support to the idea of the Great Serbia and partly because of the possibility of regaining their privileges – and into the forces prone to the Partisans.¹² The differences between them were “more tactical than essential” – for example, priest Vlada Zečević, the future communist commissioner for internal affairs and the meritorious partisan, had been among the Chetniks in the beginning of the war.¹³ The Communists evaluated SPC’s conduct during the war as generally patriotic.¹⁴ During the war, more than a hundred Catholic priests were executed¹⁵ and during 1945 as many as 206 priests were killed. For example, Archiepiscopal Spiritual Court in Zagreb reported to the Committee for religious issues and affairs (further Committee) that on the 4th July 21 people were taken away from Krapina monastery. A detailed list of people was attached to the report. They were all brutally liquidated without a trial by the Partisans.¹⁶ The Ustashe mostly persecuted the SPC’s priests during the war and less by the Communists.¹⁷ At the end of 1944 the Communists’ crimes became more numerous, when the “enemies of the people” were persecuted and individuals who were disinclined to the new government were executed without trial. The Church hierarchy had always respected the authorities and had expected

¹¹ Vjekoslav Perica, *Uloga crkava u konstrukciji državotvornih mitova Hrvatske i Srbije* 214 (www.iis.unsa.ba/posebna/mitovi/mitovi_perica.htm).

¹² Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.* vol. 1 (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2002) 82.

¹³ Đoko Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, vol. 3 (Beograd: JRJ, 2002) 138-139.

¹⁴ Klaus Buchenau, *Orthodoxie und Katholizismus in Jugoslawien 1945 - 1991.* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004) 129.

¹⁵ *Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Yugoslavia*, which was issued on the Conference of Bishops on 29th September 1945, mentions a number of 243 murdered, 169 imprisoned, 89 missing Catholic priests. Only at one commemoration, held in March 1945, 149 murdered priests and monks were mentioned. See: Stjepan Kožul, *Martirologij Crkve zagrebačke* (Zagreb: Prometej : Zagrebačka nadbiskupija, 1998) 29. Summarized details on the victims among the clergy of all denominations see: Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945.-1991.* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2006) (See: “Katolička crkva i komunisti”).

¹⁶ For a detailed account see: Hrvatski državni arhiv (HDA) Croatian State Archives (further HDA), Zagreb, ZAVNOH, box 14, 70/45 (Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske, State Anti-Fascist Council of People’s Liberation of Croatia Fund; further Fund of ZAVNOH, box 14, 70/45); DA. G. “U Maclju dostojanstveno pokopane iskopane žrtve komunističkog terora”, *Glas Koncila*, 44(30. 10. 2005).

¹⁷ In spite of numerous inaccuracies in factography and methodological flaws see: Veljko Đ. Đurić, *Golgota Srpske pravoslavne crkve 1941.-1945.* (Beograd: 1997); Veljko Đ. Đurić, “Srpska pravoslavna Crkva u prvoj deceniji komunističke vlasti 1945. - 1955. u Narodnoj Republici Hrvatskoj”, *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara* 2 (2000) 635 – 652.

the rule of law, so they found such state of anarchy especially unacceptable. It should be emphasized that the most of the clergy was not prone to conflicts and they stood aside from military and guerrilla troops. Don Joso Felicinović, the parish priest in the parish of Pag, emphasized the dilemma of numerous Catholics during the war: it was difficult for them to make a reasonable judgment because “the ruler is an executioner and the rebellions are atheists!”¹⁸ There were only a few priests among the Partisans in Croatia and they could not make a substantial difference.¹⁹ Those priests, partially excluded from the higher Church hierarchy, even at a later point were not in the position to substantially affect the relations between religious communities and the State.

Persecutions of the believers

When the Communist Party (KP – *Komunistička partija*) got involved in the war, the organizing of the completely new forms of government started.²⁰ The ending of the war restructured Croatia; new people, often inadequate and semi – educated, were brought in to all aspects of life. Gradually, the authorities implemented the one – party system and extruded the remains of civil, liberal and national parties; taking over the press the army, the police, the judicial system, the civil services and the rest in its hands. While doing so, the Party tried to draw as wide range of social strata as possible. The Catholic Church remained a structure to be thwarted, so it would not become a magnet to the discontented and the possible centre of alternative interests. Besides that, the authorities considered Vatican to be in a way connected to Italian pretensions on the east – Adriatic coast, so they thought that strong connections between the Catholic episcopate and the Holy See could be a danger to the new government and the State.

In the aftermath of the war, the criminal justice system was a public prosecutors’ tool for solving political problems. The laws themselves did not hold the basic procedural and human rights.²¹ The regime was becoming more totalitarian by each day.²² Intolerance was actively promoted and peculiar demonization of all religious communities’ practices, especially the Catholics,

¹⁸ The details about him see: Zbornik radova *Život i djelo don Jose pl. Felicinovića* (Pag: Matica hrvatska, Zadar: Filozofski fakultet, 2002).

¹⁹ The details about them see: Ćiril Petešić, *Katoličko svećenstvo u NOB-u 1941.-1945.* (Zagreb: Vjesnikova press agencija Globus, 1982); Igor Graovac, “Sudjelovanje i stradanje katoličkog svećenstva u partizanima 1941.-1945. godine”, In: *Dijalog povjesničara-istoričara* 2 (2000) 536-550.

²⁰ Čedomir Višnjčić, *Partizansko ljetovanje* (Zagreb: Prosvjeta, 2003) 120.

²¹ Nada Kisić-Kolanović, “Problem legitimiteta političkog sustava u Hrvatskoj nakon 1945.”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 24 (1992) no. 3: 177-196; Nada Kisić-Kolanović, “Vrijeme političke represije: ‘veliki sudski procesi’ u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1948.”, *ČSP* 25 (1993) no. 1:1-23.

²² Claude Lefort, *Prijepor o komunizmu* (Zagreb: Politička kultura, 2000) 161, Francois Furet, *Prošlost jedne iluzije. Oglеди o komunističkoj ideji u XX stoljeću* (Zagreb: Politička kultura, 1997).

was approved, even if only socially. Apart from executions and persecutions, the Catholic priests were often convicted and the Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac, was also imprisoned.²³ The bishop Josip Srebrnić, the Greco – Catholic bishop Janko Šimrak were also arrested and the retired bishop of Dubrovnik Josip Carević was murdered in 1945. From 1944 to 1951, 220 Catholic priests and nuns and 15 students of theology were arrested and tried.²⁴ Such methods spread fear and cast a shadow on the proclaimed democratisation; namely, the British ambassador in Belgrade sent his note of criticism.²⁵ The sources clearly show that the authorities allowed its subordinate structures to perform arrests arbitrarily on the grounds of unsubstantiated allegations. Even the priests who have not had any connections to Ustashe were executed, such as Slovenian Lazarist Janez Strašek, the Partisan sympathizer Emerik Gašić and many more. The trials were severe due to simple omissions, arranged provocations, brochures left on purpose, inappropriate statements in religious classes, envy etc.²⁶ Even the bishop Antun Akšamović, who was well disposed toward the authorities and personally of pro – Yugoslav orientation, complained occasionally. Also, the individuals who were related to clergy or helped in the liturgy, such as sacristans, organ players and altar boys, suffered. The Evangelical bishop Philip Popp, Zagreb's Mufti Ismet Muftić and the head of the Croatian Orthodox Church (HPC – *Hrvatska pravoslavna crkva*) during the war, Germogen Maksimov and others were tried and then executed. The Orthodox believers were tried somewhat more ruthlessly for collaborating with HPC, then with the Chetniks.

²³ Alojzije Stepinac (born in Krašić on 8th May 1898, died in Zagreb on 10th February 1960. He was Zagreb's Archbishop from 1937 to 1960; Stella Alexander, *Trostruki mit. Život zagrebačkog nadbiskupa Alojzija Stepinca* (Zagreb: Golija, 1990); Aleksa Benigar, *Alojzije Stepinac, hrvatski kardinal* (Zagreb: Glas Koncila, Hrvatska franjevačka provincija sv. Ćirila i Metoda, 1993), Also see the evaluation of Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970., 2 vols.*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije 2002), II: 443-449; About the verdict see: Zdenko Radelić, "Nadbiskup Stepinac i slučaj križarske zastave (1945.-1946.)", *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 49 (2002), 175-185.

²⁴ HDA, Komisija (the Committee for Religious Affairs, further the Committee), box 341, "Pregled osuđenih svećenika, časnih sestara i crkvenih funkcionara svih vjeroispovijesti na teritoriju NR Hrvatske od 1944.-1951.", Also see: Miroslav Akmadža, *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i komunistički režim 1945.-1966.* (Rijeka: Otokar Keršovani, 2004) 316 – 355.

²⁵ Katarina Spehnhjak, "Posjet Josipa Broza Tita Velikoj Britaniji 1953. godine", *ČSP* 33 (2001) no. 3: 609 - 611; "According to the British Ambassador Ivo Marletto's opinion, Yugoslavia was a totalitarian, counter – liberal, nationalistic and anti – Christian". Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945.-1991.*, (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2006), (See the Chapter: *Katolička crkva i komunisti*).

²⁶ HDA, Zagreb, The Committee, box 1, 43/46 from 8th March 1946; Stjepan Kožul, *Martirologij Crkve zagrebačke*, 361; HDA, Zagreb, the Committee, box 129, Official letter NDS 2515/47; NDS 2534/47; About Gašić's death see: BO Đakovo 923/1947; box 130; The official letter of Franjo Didović, the commissioner of the Committee for the Bishopric of Bosnia and Srijem from 22nd June 1947.

Numerous documents testify that Stepinac saved the lives of individuals during Ustasha regime.²⁷ After the Communists had come to power, there were no Catholics, which he could address as their religious leader, who would answer his appeals to consciousness and prudence, and his relations with the president of the Committee, Svetozar Rittig, were unfriendly and particularly reserved. After all, Stepinac was a dedicated anti – communist²⁸, while the Communists resorted to force from the beginning and from their position of power expected the change of attitude and more than courtesy. Just as the Yugoslav political dissident Milovan Đilas admitted afterwards, the problem with “Stepinac was not his policy towards Ustashe, but towards the Communists”²⁹

The first and the most brutal days of 1945 were also determined by the government’s inability to control the social structure, which did not hide its opposition towards new government’s standpoints and engagement.³⁰ This first period of drifting apart and mutual conflicts is the period of straightforward persecutions of the Church. Initially, the authorities tried to reach an agreement with the leadership of the religious communities. The president of the Committee Rittig was inclined to the idea of Catholic Church which would be more national, Slavic and more conformed to the authorities, but such solution was declined by the leadership of the Catholic episcopate. The authorities expected a national clergy that would be above ethnic divisions and would function as a cohesive factor in favour of integral Yugoslavia.³¹ The Communists could not annihilate the Churches, so they directed their identification “to Yugoslavia, instead of Serbs and Croats”³² The already tense situation was aggravated by *the Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Yugoslavia*,

²⁷ HDA, *Fontes* 2, (Zagreb 1996), 9 - 463; Marina Štambuk - Skalić, Josip Kolanović, Stjepan Razum (eds.) *Proces Alojziju Stepincu: dokumenti* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1997); Jure Krišto, *Katolička crkva i Nezavisna Država Hrvatska 1941.-1945.*, vol. I, II (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest i Dom i svijet, 1998).

²⁸ In his diary, Stepinac wrote about the final outcome of the war on the date 5th November 1940: “if Germany wins, it will be a disastrous terror and the downfall of small nations. If England wins, the power will remain in the hands of the Freemasons, the Jews, in other words, immorality, corruption in our lands. If USSR wins, then the devil gains power over the world and hell as well. Indeed, where to shall we raise our eyes, but to you, Lord?” The Diary of A. Stepinac, *Danas*, 7th August 1990, 66. Cited according to Ivo Goldstein, “Antisemitizam ustaškog pokreta”, *Spomenica Ljube Bobana*, (Zagreb: Zavod za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta, 1996), 327.

²⁹ Cited according to: Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkanski Babilon* (Zagreb: Alinea, 2005), 113.

³⁰ Miroslav Akmadža, *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i komunistički režim 1945 - 1966*. (Rijeka: Otokar Keršovani, 2004); Namely, the state revealed who the new power – holder is and which are his real intentions and the Church made it clear by Stepinac’s attitude that it will not agree to any compromise. Siniša Zrinščak, “Odnos Crkve i države u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1990.”, *Religija i sloboda* (ed. Ivan Grubišić) (Split: Institut za primijenjena društvena istraživanja) 1993, 112 - 113. See: Jure Krišto, *Katolička crkva u totalitarizmu : 1945. - 1990. : razmatranja o Crkvi u Hrvatskoj pod komunizmom* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globus, 1997).

³¹ Bakarić’s point of view according to: Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest* (Zagreb: Golden marketing, 1999), 256.

³² Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, 1 vol (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2002), 342.

sent from the Bishop's conference in September 1945, which accentuated troubles and difficulties the Church suffered since the Communists had come to power and advised the believers to resign from the social and political affairs, which in a long term had a far – reaching effect.³³

The other forms of oppression

There are records of cases when the duly sent parcels were not delivered, passes were not granted on time, the parish priests were fined for blessing the fields. Ridiculing the priests, nuns and convinced believers was not uncommon, especially by the press, which went so far “that the offensive terminology frequently endangered the constitutional and personal right to practice religion”.³⁴ The abuse was particularly frequent on the occasion of elections and state holidays.³⁵ The cases of staging and obstructing of the holy mass, liturgy, parish feasts and family patron–saint's days, insulting the bishops, priests and nuns were not uncommon.³⁶ Not even the pro–Yugoslav orientation could guarantee safety, because even the bishop of Bosnia and Srijem, Akšamović,³⁷ was threatened and the parish priests of Kašta and Adlešići also received threatening letters.³⁸

It was possible to obstruct the celebrations of the traditional holidays, by placing them in different, usually politically delicate context. For example, the dates of a big traditional fête in Tinjan in Istria on the holiday of St. Simon and Judas and of the fascist troops entering Rome on 28th October coincided, which Italian authorities in Istria especially emphasized; in spite of that, the local population continued to celebrate it, like they had done before the Fascists arrived, but after the war the authorities tried to prevent it as inappropriate.

³³ See the text : Branko Petranović - Momčilo Zečević, *Jugoslovenski federalizam - ideje i stvarnost, 2 vols., dokumenti 1943.-1986.* (Beograd: Prosveta, 1987), 277 - 286.

³⁴ Katarina Spehnbjak, *Javnost i propaganda: Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske 1945.-1952.* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest: Dom i svijet, 2002), 171.

³⁵ Commissioner A. Buratović's official letter from Krk from 29th December 1946. HDA, the Committee, box 129; Commissioner Didović from Đakovo writes about similar cases, box 130, 1139/47, Official letter from 5th December 1947.

³⁶ HDA, the Committee, box 130, 1181/47 Rittig's letter to Ivan Krajačić about sacrilegious mistreatment of the Catholic holy objects in Margečan, box 131, The official letter BO Split 2/48 about the events during Christmas celebration in Drvenik, riots in Sinjska Krajina, Metković, Makarska, Imotski; Commissioner Buratović's official letter from 22nd January 1948 about the disturbances during the Christmas Eve's Mass in Olib; Official letter NDS 458/48 from 23rd January 1948 about disturbances and shootings during the Christmas Eve's Mass in Jablanovac nearby Bistra and about the shootings in the church in Pušća; box 130, hampering the liturgy in Sinac, the Committee's official letter to the Ministry of Internal Affairs 1028/47.

³⁷ Margareta Matijević, “Odnos Komisije za vjerska pitanja i bosansko-srijemskoga biskupa Antuna Akšamovića”, *Zbornik u čast Hrvoja Matkovića* (Zagreb: Hrvatski studiji, 2005), 185 – 193.

³⁸ HDA, the Committee, box 132, Bishop Salis – Seewis' official letter to the Committee from 1st October 1948. HDA, the Committee, box 131, Bishop Ordinariate of Križevci Bishopric's official letter, no. 422/1948; box 130, Official letter of NDS 6710/1947.

The acts of the lower rank authorities were often motivated by despicable impulses – vengeance for inappropriate words, petty acrimoniousness, money and envy. The lower ranks of clergy frequently reproached the officials of the County People's Committees for abusing emergency powers given to them against the local parish priests and believers. The common pattern of oppression, even in the later periods, was the practice of introducing additional programs, sport activities, during the sole Sunday mass, organizing parties and similar programs to alienate the youth from the religious communities. The opponents of the society were vilified, there was a case of the abrupt search of the priests' premises when "love letters" were found. The authorities interfered with the bishops' authorities by conferring and depriving of jurisdiction over the parishes or by punishing the Orthodox priest for disallowing the members of another denomination to figure as godfathers at holy sacraments.

The seminaries

At the beginning of 1950s, the persecutions abated, there were no more unresolved murders, even prison sentences were reduced and granting the clemencies became more frequent. However, the especially sore spots of the relations between the authorities and the religious communities remained the same: the association of the clergy, the question of civil matrimonies and divorces, the question of religious education and seminaries, albeit the authorities tolerated the biggest and the most important one on Šalata in Zagreb.³⁹ On several occasions the Communists conducted investigations against seminary students and students of theology, with a view to dissolving the seminary and oppressing the Church. Thus, in 1951 the students of theology in Zagreb were tried. In May 1955, after the five theology students were sentenced for the alleged Ustasha and irredentist propagation by the County court in Rijeka, the Seminary was dissolved and in October 1956 the Central Seminary in Split was also dissolved. Then, a group of novices went to Đakovo where a serious political process awaited the students of seminary in 1959.⁴⁰ During the Communist regime the novices were under constant pressure. As pupils they did not have common social privileges or the right to medical care, although the Church looked after them and found ways to help them when in need. There are no records of cases of abrupt deaths and the like. The seminary students, theology students and priests experienced inconveniences during the draft period also. They were often ridiculed and interrogated. For a statement

³⁹ HDA, Zagreb, the Committee, box 130, Minister Ante Vrkljan's decision from 15th October 1945, the Committee no. 740/45.

⁴⁰ See: Vladimir Šubat, "Kako je došlo do osude zagrebačkih bogoslova 1951. godine" *Glas Koncila*, 30th May 2004, 25; *Vjesnik*, 17th May 1955, 2; About the convicted theology student from Rijeka, Josip Kapš, see: Antun Luketić, *Josip Kapš: svećenik sa dva križna puta* (Ogulin: Župa Gospić, 2004); HDA, the Committee, box 39, file of materials concerning Đakovo case, see particularly: SUP Kotara Osijek no. 744/59 from 6th October 1959, Stepinac's letter to the father Ćiril Kos from 3rd July 1959, the Committee Pov. 08-3/1-1959 about the general monitoring in the noviciate schools.

such as “the God created the man and he did not originate from monkeys” a person could be sentenced to death.⁴¹ The authorities had endeavoured to alienate the youth from the seminaries by, in the first years, granting them privileges and scholarships if they leave the Seminary, which was later questioned, for the reason of the loss of more intelligent students, so they later applied more subtle means of pressure. Only in 1958, 47 young men left the Seminary, which cost the state 13 000 000 dinars.⁴²

The religious orders

Among the numerous religious orders in Croatia, the Friars Minor Conventuals, the Friars Minor Capuchins and the Glagolitic Tertiaries kept the most harmonious relations to authorities and the Dominicans were praised the most.⁴³ Among women’s religious communities the most numerous ones were The Sisters of Mercy, who were mostly engaged in education and nursing; more or less without hindrance functioned the Dominican Sisters, the Ursulines, the Benedictine Sisters, The Sisters of the Holy Cross from Đakovo, The Sisters of Mary, The Sister Servants of Mercy, The Poor Sisters of Our Lady, the Religious Community of the Sisters of Divine Love Daughters and so on. The Communists had taken over the care over hospitals, expelled the crosses from the hospital rooms, closed the chapels in almost every hospital; in spite of that, until the end of the Communist regime there was a significant number of nuns who worked without hindrance as nurses under the condition not to wear habits or display their religious affiliation in other external manner. Those rules in the end of the Communist regime underwent liberalization.

The emigration

The authorities had difficulties with the so – called Catholic priest émigrés, who were perceived as Ustashe – orientated. In 1954, no less than 143 Catholic priests signed *the Memorandum* in USA, which publicly denounced the government of Yugoslavia for persecutions of the Catholics.⁴⁴ The Pope’s Croatian Institute of Saint Jerome in Rome, which was a residence of many priests who were under a threat of prison sentence in case of returning to Yugoslavia, although they could not exactly be labelled as Ustashe, was especially under attack.⁴⁵ Most of the priests were interested in clearing the situa-

⁴¹ HDA, the Committee, box 131, See the Office’s note 124/48 about Ivan Pervan’s case. Later, the sentence was reduced to five years of prison.

⁴² HDA, the Committee, box 38, Pov. 08-27/1-1958 from 13th September 1958.

⁴³ HDA, Zagreb, the Committee, box 132, 1012/48.

⁴⁴ See the text of the Memorandum and its signers in HDA, the Committee, box 341. See the detailed explanation: Miroslav Akmadža; *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i komunistički režim 1945.-1966.* (Rijeka: Otokar Keršovani, 2004), 355 – 364.

⁴⁵ HDA, Zagreb, the Committee, box 38, Roko Rogošić’s report on a travel in Czechoslovakia, Austria and Italy, Pov. 8/1, from 28th January 1958.

tion in the Institute of Saint Jeronim. The Yugoslav government pressure will gradually lead to the retirement of the part of these priests and open a possibility for education of the novices from Yugoslavia in Rome. The signing of *the Protocol* between the Holy See and Yugoslavia in 1966 had led to more open and relaxed relations, which will have encouraged the practice of sending talented novices to the European universities. The émigrés did not welcome *the Protocol*. In the 1950s, the authorities were aware of the existent refugee camps; for example, in the village Asten nearby Linz, and the Church organized forms of pastoral caring among the Catholics, which was a common practice among the Slovenian Catholics and the Orthodox Serbs. The authorities monitored travelling: going abroad required reports, permissions and passports. The foreign press articles on the situation in Yugoslavia were monitored and quickly reacted upon. On the 10th anniversary of the archbishop Stepinac's death in 1970, the process of his beatification, much to the Communists aggravation, was initiated and it coincided with upheavals in Croatia. The actualisation of the Archbishop Stepinac's beatification is at the same time the actualisation of pseudo – historiography about Stepinac. As the reverence for Stepinac spread, the authorities published more to create negative public perception of his work, especially in Serbia.⁴⁶

The agrarian reform

The pivotal tasks of the new government were industrialization and the agrarian reform. One of the slogans the Communists promoted was “Factories to the workers and the land to the farmers”. Through the agrarian reform that started on 23rd October 1945, the government confiscated landed property larger than 35 ha and the religious communities lost the landed property larger than 10 ha i.e. the possession or the usufruct of 80% of it.⁴⁷ The example of the Metropolitan Kaptol of Zagreb, which was the holder of 28 different corporations and was reduced to the maximum of 10 ha, shows the arbitrariness of the legislature. Only on the territory of Zagreb Archbishopric, 4/5 of different corporations' landed property was confiscated in irregular and summarized procedure that could hardly be called legal. To be a legalist was in vain.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Vjekoslav Perica, “Uloga crkava u konstrukciji državotvornih mitova Hrvatske i Srbije“ 214, Cited according to: www.iis.unsa.ba/posebna/mitovi/mitovi_perica.htm.

⁴⁷ Marijan Maticka, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1948.* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga; Stvarnost, 1990), 92. Details on the implementation of the agrarian reform see: Miroslav Akmadža, *Oduzimanje imovine Katoličkoj crkvi i crkveno-državni odnosi od 1945. do 1966.* (Zagreb: Tkalčić, 2003).

⁴⁸ HDA, Zagreb, the Committee, box 326, Zagreb Archbishop Alojzije Stepinac's petition to Vladimir Bakarić from 17th August 1945, sent also to the Committee.

The Association of the priests

In the Communist Yugoslavia, there were pseudo – Catholics who had the intention to undermine the Socialist system, as well as engagé bourgeois intellectuals who were disinclined to a strong Church influence, regardless of not being atheists. They were especially troubled by some manifestations of the Church. For example, a large number of members of the Crusaders Organisation joined the NDH structures and the Communists disapproved of that. When the war ended, the leading Crusaders were executed, even the opponents of nazism and those strongly engaged in saving the lives of the victims of war, as in the case of the third president of the Crusaders Organisation, a Catholic intellectual dr., Felix Niedzielski.⁴⁹ It was out of the question that such organisations could continue their activities and the activity of pronounced religious societies was also in question because of the danger of infiltration of the military remains of NDH.⁵⁰ The Catholic Church claimed the jurisdiction in the matter of founding of the religious societies.⁵¹ The communists often changed their tactics. They changed their attitude to the priests depending on the balance of forces and the estimation of their own interest. The so – called differentiation was aimed at dividing the clergy. The Communists formed societies consisting of loyal, accommodationist and collaborative priests to provoke a conflict with the bishops and create uncertainty among the clergy.⁵² The first significant “St. Cyril and Methodius Society of the Priests” was founded in Pazin on the 16th of September 1948. The bishops gave their approval and the most of the clergy accepted it; such an outcome the Church structures attributed to the special circumstances in Istria. *The Class Association of Catholic Priests in Croatia* was established in 1953. The severe bishop’s resistance and the unanimous disapproval contributed to the low popularity of the Association with the Catholic population. Stepinac called it “an outgrowth of hell” aimed only to undermine the Catholic Church.⁵³ Promises, threats and blackmails were used to recruit the priests. Inclined to authorities were the priests of pro – Yugoslav orientation, mostly of an older age and already discredited for omissions, and the younger ones of controversial behav-

⁴⁹ See: A. C. “Dva zločinca ili mučenika”, *Glas Koncila*, no. 10 from 7th March 2004, 12.

⁵⁰ HDA, the Committee, box 126, 1094/1945 from 5th January 1946.

⁵¹ HDA, the Committee, box 126, Official letter BO from Krk 679/1945 from 6th December 1945, About religious societies see Can. 298 – 329 particularly Can. 299 § 3 where no private religious society is allowed, without the Church authorities’ examination and authorization of its statute, also Can. 305, § 1, “All religious societies are placed under the supervision of the Church authorities...” *Codex iuris canonici*, (Zagreb: Glas Koncila, 1996)

⁵² “The Party endeavoured to break the frontal attitude of the clergy against the government by differentiating them...and to especially break apart the unity of the clergy’s leadership”. Branko Petranović, *Politička i ekonomska osnova narodne vlasti u Jugoslaviji za vreme obnove* (Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, 1969), 198.

⁵³ K. E. Beluhan, *Stepinac govori* (Valencija: Tiskara Samostana Gandia : Hrvatska tiskara, 1967) 200; according to Miroslav Akmadža, *Katolička crkva u Hrvatskoj i komunistički režim 1945.-1966.* (Rijeka: Otokar Keršovani, 2004), 172.

our⁵⁴ and careerists.⁵⁵ The usual patterns of pressure were coercion, exhortation and offering material benefits. The Bishop's Conference of Yugoslavia at first announced *the Association* as "unfavourable" (*non expedit – not recommended*) and in 1952 as "inadmissible" (*non licet*). That exacerbated the conflict in the Church – State relations and finally caused the breaking of the diplomatic relations between Vatican and Yugoslavia; to the Communist government the immediate cause for this was Archbishop's Stepinac being appointed the Cardinal of the Catholic Church in December 1952. Some church historians claim that the bishop's fear was unjustifiable: "an evil could have risen out of them, but it had not, neither some People's Church was established, nor some high – rank negotiations were held or the priests were disobedient to the bishops."⁵⁶ It is hard to tell whether these judgments would be valid had the bishop's attitude been different, pliable or more inclined to the new state and the government. The authorities found the paper and the money for *the Association's* publications, but it was hard to distribute them through regular Church channels, even with the most politically correct content. The approximate age of the members in 1958 was 61.⁵⁷ *The Association* was frequently discussed on the *Committee of Internal Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Croatia* meetings, which were attended by the Minister of the Internal Affairs Ivan Stevo Krajačić. The members of *the Association* were in the tough position: the Episcopate criticized them for their loyalty and collaboration with the authorities that provided them help; the other priests boycotted the Association, the believers often avoided it and the local authorities often showed lack of understanding. All relevant indicators show that *the Association* completely failed. As the bishops became the only competent negotiators, it gradually lost the last bits of influence that it had at the end of 1940s. The establishing of the Orthodox believers' association was less difficult. As late as 1947, the Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić issued an instruction to the clergy and recommended collaboration with the authorities in all duties that benefit both the State and the Church.⁵⁸ This instruction was a basis for establishment of the "*Priests' Association of the Orthodox Clergy*" in the People's Republic of Croatia on 5th October 1947, which counted 102 out of 116 priests. The association of priests was an ideal tool of integrating SPC in a monolithic state sys-

⁵⁴ One of such priests, M. G., accused bishop Akšamović in 1945. Akšamović wrote about him that he was a drunk, who laid on the street in Gudinci, "so passengers, who felt pity for him, placed a brick under his head". Leaving Gudinci, he took somebody's wife with him, so her whole family put the charges on him. During this situation, Akšamović had to suspend him from his duties in the parish, but later he got employed in the district attorney's office in Brod. HDA, the Committee, box 326, Akšamović's letter to Rittig from 15th November 1945.

⁵⁵ Miroslav Akmadža, "Staleško društvo katoličkih svećenika Hrvatske u službi komunističkog režima", *Tkalčić*, 7 (2003), Zagreb 2003.

⁵⁶ Srećko M. Džaja, *Politička realnost jugoslovenstva 1918.-1991.* (Sarajevo - Zagreb: Svjetlo Riječi, 2004) 241. Ignacije Gavran, "Franjevačka provincija Bosna Srebrena od svršetka II svjetskog rata do prestanka SFR Jugoslavije (1945.-1991.) *Sputnici bosanske povijesti*, (Sarajevo: Svjetlo Riječi, 1990), 133 - 146. Cited according to: <http://www.bosnasrebrena.ba>

⁵⁷ HDA, Zagreb, the Committee, box 38, small file the class association of the Catholic priests.

⁵⁸ Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, 243.

tem, of disjoining them from the masses and weakening of their influence. They held meetings in front of Tito's busts, underneath Yugoslav flags, without crosses and icons. The Bishops were aware that the Association's backing was the State, that is, the Party, and the newly – appointed Zagreb's Patriarch Damaskin Grdanički's disapproval of the Association was the precise reason for the difficulties and delay his arrival to Zagreb. In 1954 there were different Associations that counted 1759 out of 2301 Orthodox priests in Yugoslavia. The judgement of Yugoslav State Security Service (further UDBA) was that the Association's collective task is to work against the religion in general.⁵⁹

Material circumstances of the churches

From 5th February 1946 a decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of NRH prohibits the collecting of donations for the Churches with argumentation that it might be instrumentalized for anti-popular propaganda and subversive activity.⁶⁰ Depending on the existing Church property, economic power of the population, the activities and the influence of the clergy, the material situation of the clergy of different confessions considerably differed and the most favourable was for the Catholics. Whether a priest would get any help, depended on the Association's proposal and the arbitrary suggestion of the Committee. The authorities materially supported individual priests, if they were in need and if there were no objections to their behaviour during the Second World War. They were thoroughly checked for another income and were not granted help lightly.⁶¹ In the poor parts of Lika and Dalmatia the Orthodox clergy lived in such poverty, that it, without any pressure, neglected religious duties in order not to lose county and district support. The Orthodox priest Branislav Pavić from Rujevac wrote about himself: "...I suffer from hunger". In his words, he had from 200 to 300 dinars a month, which was ten times less than the salary of a nun in the hospital.⁶² The principle was to support the priests who would especially neglect religious duties and practice.⁶³ A comparison of the help disbursed to the priests and associations in 1954 and the first trimester in

⁵⁹ Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, 70, 76.

⁶⁰ HDA, the Committee, box 126, NRH MUP 35/46; also see: NRH MUP Pov. 754-II/1945 from 11th January 1946, about the need for reduction of financial aid to the priests on the occasion of issuing parish registers. About money collecting see: the Committee, box 127, 701/1946 from 29th April 1946. The case of Ivanovo Selo, district Grubišno Polje, where the authorities were careful "due to the closeness of the border and politically delicate region"; The response of the chief secretary of the presidium the government M. Žanko 4715/46 to the Committee.

⁶¹ HDA, the Committee, box 324, File: Disbursement of the financial aid to the priests 1947. Dopsis iz Vojnića, Official letter KNO Bjelovar no. 375/47 from 13th October 1947; the Committee 1222/1947 from 12th February 1948; KNO Delnice Pov. no. 137/48 from 25th June 1948.

⁶² Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, 307, 101; HDA, the Committee, box 130, official letter of the Church's court of Eparchy of Gornji Karlovci 434/47, attached Pavić's hand – written plead from 2nd July 1947.

⁶³ Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, 48; HDA, the Committee, box 324, Decision KNO Bjelovar and characteristic for the priest Venijamin Pavlovski Pov. 456/47 from 13th October 1947.

1955, shows that the Catholic priests were settled with 824,200 dinars and to the fewer Orthodox priests with 1,769.000 dinars and the Association of the Orthodox priests got only 400,000, in contrast to the Association of Catholic priests that got 6,000.000. The Muslim religious community got all together 700.000.⁶⁴ Even larger disproportion in real needs occurred in 1963, when the State gave 1,650.000 dinars to the Association of the priests and for all expenses for reconstructions and repairing of the churches it gave 300.000 dinars.⁶⁵ The material support for the churches in need, which came from abroad, was extremely beneficial. For example, one of the Committees' reports points out that of 400 parishes, 100 parishes already has a motorcycle, 13 of which were donated from abroad. In the government's opinion, the Catholic Church supposedly received 69,480.414 dinars in cash and 43,661.715 dinars in packages in the first seven months of 1957, which was a substantial sum. There were somewhat over 25 tons of non-assessed packages, mostly with food and used clothes.⁶⁶ The authorities were convinced that the priests no longer need help, but they flourish without complaints. The channels of underground financing, not controlled by the authorities, is one of the research questions that deserves greater attention.

The Serbian Orthodox Church

At the end of the war, SPC was in utter chaos. Ustashe murdered the bishop of Gornji Karlovci, Sava Trlajić, at the beginning of the war and pro – Chetnik orientated Episcopo of Dalmatia, Irinej Đorđević⁶⁷, stayed in emigration. A significant deficiency in the clergy and the abrupt diminishing of the religious practice brought SPC in awkward and subjected position. In December 1946, of 353 Serbian Orthodox parishes on the territory of NRH 233 were without clergy.⁶⁸ The bishop of Gornji Karlovci, Nikanor Iličić, appointed in 1947, reports in 1948 that probably many objects were taken to Italy from Lika and Krbava “but since there are no priests there, nor any church self – governing organization, the incidents were not reported”.⁶⁹ There were even suggestions

⁶⁴ HDA, the Committee, box 324.

⁶⁵ HDA, the Committee, registers, book 6, Addition for the Committee's meeting from 8th February 1964. Report on the Committee for religious affairs' work in the year 1963.

⁶⁶ HDA, the Committee, box 38, Pov. no. 27/1 1958. Some problems in the functioning of the Committee.

⁶⁷ Episcopo of Dalmatia Irinej Đorđević (born in Vrnčani in 1894, died at Cambridge in 1952). He was accused, along with the refugee episcopo Nikolaj Velimirović and Dionisije Milivojević, for cooperation and giving support to Draža Mihailović during the war and for appealing foreign countries to intervene against the new government in the Second Yugoslavia.

⁶⁸ HDA, the Committee, box 128, 1668/46. Report on the numbers of the priests of all denominations on the territory of NRH, 1st December 1946.

⁶⁹ HDA, the Committee, box 131, Episcopo Nikanor's report no. 34/48 from 4th February 1948. This is the first document of the Church's court of the Eparchy of Gornji Karlovci written by typing machine; box 324, Official letter KNO Ogulin 330/ 1947 from 11th October 1947, reporting that there is no parish priest in Plaški.

that the ruined and vacant eparchies should be abolished.⁷⁰ With the return of the Patriarch Gavriilo Dožić from the emigration, the relations between the authorities and the Government were somewhat stabilized, although carefully and cautiously. After he returned in 1946, The Holy Assembly of Bishops could summon, the Bishops could be appointed, the vacant eparchies were reinforced and the situation in the country was somewhat normalized. In time, the number of trials declined and the society stabilized, but as regards to the Communist persecutions of the clergy, SPC was in the best position. The authorities were informed of the chauvinist incidents and the pro – Chetnik tendencies, but they managed to neutralize them and to gain the complete control of SPC.⁷¹

During the Communist regime, only on the territory of the Archbishopric of Lika, 17 Orthodox churches were torn down, burnt or mined.⁷² Many of them remained in disrepair, which is unusual, bearing in mind that they were placed on the territory with the Serbian majority who had the authority to decide.⁷³ The sociologist claim that the fastest disintegration of the religious consciousness of population in the Second Yugoslavia happened among the Serbs from heterogeneous areas, possibly due to the tribulations during the Second World War.⁷⁴ As a result of the all – pervading process of atheization of individuals and society during the Communist regime, many traditional Orthodox regions lost their Christian essence and the politics more and more influenced the role and the engagement of the Church.⁷⁵ The military and government institutions occupied buildings and parochial homes

⁷⁰ Radmila RADIĆ, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, 12.

⁷¹ See Politbiro CK KPH's (The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia), the Political Bureau conference report from 26th July 1945 with information that in Srijem "chauvinists of Greater Serbia politics are lynching and killing imprisoned Croatian home guards – men, calling them Ustasha and that this situation is spreading towards Slavonija region... The leaders of these persecutions are refugee Serbs, returnees and some priests." ... Duško Brkić on Politbiro's meeting on 5th June 1947 tells that almost complete clergy placed itself under the protection of Great Serbia politics, adding that "a Chetnik attack is occurring in the whole region." Cited according to: Dušan Bilandžić, *Hrvatska moderna povijest*, 261.

⁷² On the history of destruction of these Orthodox churches see: www.eparhija-gornjokarlovacka.hr/Ličko-L.htm; Veljko Đ. Đurić, *Letopis Srpske pravoslavne crkve 1946.-1958.* (Knin, Beograd: Zora, 2000).

⁷³ Something about the Orthodox believers destroying churches and about the situations, continuously repeating even after 1970s, in which the Serbian Bishop could not get a lunch in the areas with Serbian majority see in: Mile Bogović, "Crkva i država u srpskom pravoslavlju", *Bosna franciscana*, I, (1993), no. 1: 67 – 75.

⁷⁴ Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, I: 133.; See also: Nikola Dugandžija, *Religija i nacija. Istraživanje u zagrebačkoj regiji* (Zagreb: Institut za društvena istraživanja Sveučilišta, 1985).

⁷⁵ Mile Bogović, "Srpsko pravoslavlje i suvremena zbivanja u Hrvatskoj" *Kana*, XXIII (1992) 2, 35; "The activity of the priests is reduced to liturgy. In comparison to the western Catholic and Evangelical Christianity, the Serbian Orthodox Christianity does not have systematic catechesis, the Announcement in the full sense of the word, no religious education nor socialization of values. A consequence of such functioning of the Serbian Orthodoxy is a lesser number of baptized individuals, in some regions less than 20%, weak intensity of religious life, lack of

(in Karlovac, Ogulin, Dvor na Uni, Rujevac, Dubica etc.) without paying the rent, the legal proprietors were evicted, and the schools were built on foundations of churches. The two most significant problems of SPC were the division of the Church from the State and “splitting of the unity” which was not acute so much in Croatia, but mainly in Macedonia, partially in Monte Negro and the emigration.⁷⁶ The Orthodox Church was more vulnerable and compliant than the others and depended more on the state subventions. SPC did not have a strong international centre as the Catholic Church did, many Orthodox nations were afflicted by Communism, its clergy was more sensitive to persecutions having lead a family life, the war significantly weakened it, the conversions were more frequent and it was, just like other churches, deprived of its property. The aspect of material deprivation was especially useful to the Communists and the Orthodox believers were damaged the most.

The bishop of Pakrac Emilijan Marinović protested to the authorities against the intrusions and difficulties inflicted by the local authorities. Among other reported there was a case of breaking the cross for the purpose of making raki-ja (a strong liquor) and the case of punishment of the priest Miroljub Protić for baptising 8 children in a private home (there was no church within a radius of 40 km). After visiting the counties of Daruvar and Slavonska Požega and investigating on the spot, the authorities concluded these were isolated and unintentional cases that have expired by limitation and that the priests like Protić avoided asking for authorities’ approvals therefore a priori breaking the law.⁷⁷ The authorities’ advice was to go beyond personal conflicts, to settle disputes and, above all, to respect the laws. The authorities themselves purposely stalled the procedures, rejected the lawful pleas and justifiable appeals of the members of SPC. It took several years of waiting for the vacant parochial premises in Topusko, where the church demolished during the war was reconstructed in 1974. There were difficulties in Blatuša, Kapelna, Gračac and elsewhere.⁷⁸ The question of permits for building religious objects, which became especially actualised in Split, where SPC refused any discussion against its principles, additionally exacerbated the relations between the Communist regime and SPC during 1980s.⁷⁹

religious education, quite weak religious culture. But, the most pernicious result of the Serbian Orthodoxy is unbelievably weak ethical strength of the Orthodoxy.” Ivo Marković, “Srpsko – pravoslavno zaleđe razaranja sakralnih objekata u Bosni i Hercegovini kao sredstvo etničkog čišćenja”, *Bosna franciscana*, I (1993) no. 1: 97 – 98.

⁷⁶ Veljko Đurić Mišina, *Letopis Srpske pravoslavne Crkve 1946.-1958.*, vol. I. (Knin-Beograd: Zora, 2000) 40.

⁷⁷ HDA, the Committee, box 38, Pov. 63/1-1958, Official note on the bishop Marinović’s visit, Official note on visitation of Slavonska Požega district and Daruvar, situation on the field from 28th August 1958.

⁷⁸ HDA, the Committee, box 38, Pov. 27/1-1958. Some problems in functioning of the Committee pp. 8 – 9.

⁷⁹ Vjekoslav Perica, “Dva spomenika jedne ere. Političke konotacije izgradnje pravoslavne crkve i katoličke konkatedrale u Splitu 1971.-1991.” *ČSP*, 31 (1999) no. 1: 93 – 126.

The Evangelical parishes

Until 1945 the Evangelical Church had its bishop, Philip Popp, who founded the Church's bishopric. The Communists sentenced him to death and shortly after, he was executed.⁸⁰ His son, Edgar Popp⁸¹, was arrested, interrogated and then released. Later, he had obtained a function of the Croatian Evangelics' Elder and had become the actual leading figure in this religious community until 1960, when he was forced to leave Yugoslavia. As the single evangelical priest on the territory of NRH, he obtained duties in the parishes of Zagreb, Bjelovar, Karlovac, Sušak, Pakrački Antunovac, Kutina and Ljubljana and after the annexation of Istria, for that region also.⁸²

Although the paragraph of *the Declaration of basic rights of peoples and citizens*, announced on the ZAVNOH conference in Topusko, guaranteed inviolability of private property and the ownership right, those guarantees were not observed in regards to Germans and some other citizens, but the Germans were treated in an especially radical manner. On the 21 December 1944 AVNOJ issued a directive on confiscating all private property owned by Germans, in open violation of the ownership right, which the democratic countries commonly respect. Act amendments on the Citizenship Law, subsequently accepted on 1 December 1948, additionally prohibited their return.⁸³ The main reason for the decrease of the Evangelical religious community in Croatia after the Second World War was its correlation with a large German minority group, which was exiled in the last years of the war. The main problem was the insufficiency of priests due to the emigration of forty priests from Yugoslavia after the Second World War. Property of the Evangelical Church Parish in Zagreb was confiscated according to the Town Committee for Confiscation's decision, with argumentation that: "the organization is of purely German character".⁸⁴ During the confiscation procedure, no one was interrogated; the decision was discretionary.⁸⁵ There were up to 1500 members of the Evangelical Church in Zagreb and in NRH around 3500, all filial church parishes included. Nevertheless, the Evangelical community founded the theological faculty "Matija Vlačić Ilirik" in Zagreb in 1976.

⁸⁰ For details see: Vladimir Geiger, "Sudski procesi u Hrvatskoj 1945. godine: smrtna presuda evangeličkom biskupu dr. Philippu Poppu" *ČSP*, 27 (1995), no. 1, 157 - 166; See also: Juraj Kolarić, *Kršćani na drugi način* (Zagreb: Veritas, 1976) 44 - 45.

⁸¹ For details see: Pharrer i. R. Edgar Popp zum 85., Cited according to: <http://www.hilf-skomitee.de/>

⁸² HDA, the Committee, box 129, 386/47, or 328/47; box 130, Zagreb Evangelical Church Community's official letter, 139/47.

⁸³ Vladimir Geiger, *Folksdojčeri pod teretom kolektivne krivnje* (Osijek: Njemačka narodnosna zajednica, 2002) 56 - 57; 73 - 74.

⁸⁴ HDA, the Committee 129, Town's Committee for Confiscation's decision from 19th April 1946 no. 1031/46. See several documents on the main conference from 9th February 1947.

⁸⁵ HDA, the Committee, box 129, Plead to the Public Prosecutor's Office, 32/47, the Committee 295/47; The Public Prosecutor's office refusal no. G 1446/1946/3. About fusion see box 129, Evangelical Church Community's official letter 33/47.

The Baptist religious community regularly pointed out that the Bible and the religious duties oblige the believers to comply with authorities, to perform required civic duties and to participate in social life, especially in reconstruction and reconstitution of the homeland, according to ones abilities. The Baptists regularly served “*the Divine Service*” in Zagreb, Međimurje (Mačkovec), Lika and Gorski kotar (Blata - Plaški), in Banovina (Grabovac) and in Daruvar and Vinkovci. Josip Horak, the leading figure of the Baptists during the Communist regime (from 1957 – 1968) and the president of the Union of the Baptist Churches of Yugoslavia and the vice president of the World’s Baptist Assembly from 1985, was elected for the biennial chairmanship of the Association of the Baptist Church Parishes in the end of 1946.⁸⁶ In 1967, he managed to organize a visit of the leading Baptist preacher, Billy Graham, whose second visit and the seven-day preaching in the Catholic church of the Blessed Marko Križevčanin in Zagreb was broadcasted on several European TV stations.

The laws of the First Yugoslavia did not acknowledge the Adventists; moreover, they were considered an unwelcome religious community. Also, in other situations, the Adventists were the subjects of dispute, mainly for refusing to enter military service. They were considered a threat to the constitutional order and the security of the State.⁸⁷ In the end of the 1960s they also spread their influence and established secondary school in Maruševac nearby Varaždin that will have become the faculty in 1978.

Due to their negligible influence, small religious communities were not a serious obstacle to the authorities of the Second Yugoslavia and Croatia. Passivity and the absence of the so – called clericalization were determined by a relatively small number of religious communities. The authorities saw the problems only in the possible contacts with the foreign countries from which the influence strange to socialism could be infiltrated.⁸⁸

The Jewish religious community

The interwar period was “the golden age” of the Jewish community in Croatia. During NDH, between 75 and 80% of Jewish communities on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina perished, and the majori-

⁸⁶ HDA, the Committee fund, box 129, several unnumbered documents on the Baptists; The Resolution from 30th November 1946; HDA, the Committee, box 131, Official letter of the Union of the Baptist Churches of FNRJ, 16/48 from 30th March 1948.

⁸⁷ Decree of the Ministry of Justice from 1st June 1930, no. 82957/29-XV, department of religions in Belgrade, stayed in effect, literally states in the first article: “The Christian sect of Yugoslav Adventists is not a confession acknowledged by the law and it is forbidden of public confession”; About Adventists see: HDA, the Committee, box 129 441/1947; See File on Seventh – day Adventist sectarian activity in box 126, particularly the official letter ONO Brod from the Department of national security no. Pov. 61-III-1-46.

⁸⁸ *Crkva i politika u samoupravnom društvu* (Zagreb: 1967, See Zdenko Jurašek’s paper, 90 – 91).

ty of thirty-one pre-war Jewish communities could not continue their activities.⁸⁹ In 1946, the biggest communities – Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Orthodox in Zagreb – united into one legal successor. The similar situations occurred in the whole state, because there were places where the Jews were extinct. After the war, the communities were converted into refugee camps, hospitals, soup kitchens and they also conducted the emigration to the state of Israel.⁹⁰ The Jewish religious community in Zagreb had the administrative, social, religious and cultural and educational committee. Only the community in Zagreb had the spiritual guidance in persons of the chief rabbi Hinko Urbach and the rabbi Bernard Grüner.⁹¹ Out of 41 pre-war synagogues, 21 were torn down during the war and 6 after the war. The Communists tore down the synagogues in Ilok in 1948/49, in Karlovac around 1960, in Kutina in 1968/69, in Uptown Osijek in 1950, the both synagogues in Vukovar in 1958 and 1965; some were converted into music schools in Sisak and Bjelovar, youth centres, factory warehouses, convenient stores etc. Effectively, only three synagogues were in use for liturgy. In 1946 in Zagreb there were around 2500 Jews, but not all of them were not from Zagreb. In the period from 1948 to 1952 half of them opted for Israel and left the country. In 1956 the authorities reconstructed the synagogues in Dubrovnik and Split. Also, the Jewish archive and the library, as well as kindergarten and the nursing home were established and in the later period the issuing of publications started.

The Muslim religious community

In the aftermath of the war, the Muslim religious community in NRH did not have a prominent position. The number of the believers was not large, maybe about 3000⁹² and most of them were in the towns. There were three Muslim religious communities, in Dubrovnik, Osijek and Zagreb. In the end of June 1945, Zagreb Mufti, Ismet Muftić, was tried in a process against religious and part of the Ustasha officials and was sentenced to death. The Community Council (džematski medžlis – ar. Jama'ah, tur. Cemaat; medžlis – ar. majlis, tur. meclis) was led by the chief Imam of Zagreb, Himzo Alagić. The Second Yugoslavia confiscated most of the property of the Islamic Religious Community (IVZ – *Islamska vjerska zajednica*), abolished Shari'a courts and Dervish orders, enforced obligatory eight-year schooling for the children which led to dissolution of mektebs (religious elementary schools) and prohibited Muslim head wear for women (tur. Ferace). The Muslims had cer-

⁸⁹ A detailed account on the Jews and their tribulation in Croatia see: Ivo Goldstein, *Židovi u Zagrebu 1918-1941*. (Zagreb: Novi liber, 2004); Ivo and Slavko Goldstein, *Holokaust u Zagrebu* (Zagreb: Židovska općina : Novi Liber, 2001).

⁹⁰ Melita Švob, *Židovi u Hrvatskoj*, 1. vol (Zagreb: Židovska općina: Istraživački i dokumentacijski centar "Cendo": K. D. Miroslav Šalom Freiburger, 2004), 105, 405; HDA, the Committee, box 324. The list of religious officials delivered to the Committee, no. 2120/49-k.

⁹¹ HDA, the Committee, box 127, ŽBO Zagreb's response to the Committee from 15th April 1946.

⁹² There are estimations that in 1950s it had 3000 believers. Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945.-1970.*, vol. 2, 585.

tain international influence and background in the Arabic countries.⁹³ The mosque, which Pavelić built by adapting Meštrović's Home of Fine Artists, was maintained with the reference office⁹⁴ until 1948, when it was closed, minarets torn down and the Community Council was relocated to Tomašićeva Street where it was before the war. Not until the Supreme Vakuf (waqf – ar. Awaqāf, tur. Vakıf) Assembly conference in Sarajevo in August 1947 had been held, the new Constitution was adopted and few days later, the first, seventh in row reis-el-ulema – the religious leader of the Muslims in Yugoslavia, Ibrahim Fejić from Mostar, was elected.⁹⁵ The premises provided for liturgy, burials and rituals were mostly improvised; as yet as 1958 the Muslims asked for aid for a morgue in Dubrovnik. On the occasion of the Vakuf Committee Vice President dr. Sulejman Mašović's visit to the Committee in 1959 when he asked for material support, a sarcastic answer was received: he should ask help from the wealthy craftsmen in Zagreb.⁹⁶ They pointed out that at that time, there were already 10 000 believers in Zagreb.

Subsequent construction of the Zagreb's mosque was stalled in spite of all legal groundwork, so the construction did not begin until 1981. It was finished and ceremonially opened in 1987. In principle, the Communists always gave permits much more easily to the constructions of the religious objects in rural and depopulated regions. The number of the Muslims in Croatia gradually increased, until it finally grew tenfold at the end of the observed period. In spite of the relatively large number of the believers of around 13 – 16 % in the whole of the state, the leadership of the Islamic religious community was politically neutral and publicly almost invisible.⁹⁷

The school system

In the beginning of 1945, conducting of religious classes was already problem – ridden.⁹⁸ Public appeals to boycott the religious education were frequent. ZAVNOH decided on prohibiting private schools, as well as religious institutes. The question of religious education was immediately posed as very delicate.⁹⁹ Principle attitude was to keep the status of *quo ante bellum*, along-

⁹³ Srećko M. Džaja, *Politička realnost jugoslavenstva 1918-1991.*, 239.

⁹⁴ HDA, the Committee, box 126, FDH, The Presidium of the People's government of NRH no. 9103/45.

⁹⁵ HDA, the Committee, box 130, 792/47.

⁹⁶ HDA, the Committee, box 39, Pov. No. 08-55/1-59; No. 08- Pov. 60/1-1958.

⁹⁷ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkanski Babilon*, (Zagreb: Alinea, 2005), 148.

⁹⁸ HDA, Zagreb, ZAVNOH, box 14, 1/1945, bishop's Mileta letter from 18th January 1945, difficulties in Tribunj, Šepurine, Luka, NOO Šibenik official letter which prohibits the activity of private schools no. 103 from 17th January 1945; Official letter regarding the situation on the field no. 2/1945 from 15th February 1945, 4/1945. BO Šibenik official letter from 28th February 1945.

⁹⁹ Miroslav Akmadža, "Ometanja i zabrane vjeronauka od strane komunističkog režima u Zagrebačkoj nadbiskupiji od 1945. do 1966.," *Tkalčić - Godišnjak društva za povjesnicu Zagrebačke nadbiskupije*, 8 (2004), 347 – 443.

side the principle of optionality.¹⁰⁰ The final decision was left to the Ministry of Education, but it did not react always in due time, so there were cases where the approval was not issued on time, so the conducting of classes was postponed until the end of the school year.¹⁰¹ In many regions, more often with the Orthodox population, there were not any requests for religious classes. The report from 1949 on conducting religious education in schools states that it is held in 42 districts and not held in 45 districts. For the regions with the Serbian rebellious population it was stated that “the question of the religion was liquidated during NOB” (“People’s Liberation Struggle”).¹⁰² The thesis that mostly the Catholics attended the religious classes is corroborated by the fact that in Serbia in the beginning of 1960s out of 35000 children attending the religious classes, 20 – 22000 were Catholic.¹⁰³ People’s Schools Act in 1951, which defined education as a social category, prohibited the religious education in schools. Apart from prohibiting and obstructing the religious education, the other school subjects collided with the religious classes and teachers gave prominence to atheism and materialist view in schooling. Atheism was an expected condition for Party membership, therefore a condition of socially acceptable behaviour and of making social advances.¹⁰⁴ In the beginning, the Church holidays were tolerated, but afterwards they gradually disappeared from public life. The believers had difficulties working in education that was adapted to the principles of Marxists education and upbringing. The Catholic view on the subject was that working positions, inaccessible to the believers, create discrimination, which accounts for a breach of the Constitutions guarantee of equality before the law regardless of religion. The Party’s view, on the other hand, was that every vocation has its ethics and allowing the believers to teach would bring about hypocrisy, because the teachers form young people with their attitude outside of classes also.¹⁰⁵ Education not only excluded religious view of life, but the schools were directly attached to atheist and sometimes even antitheist worldview. Educational ideal was actually to confront pupils with religious views, so they could overcome them.¹⁰⁶ One newspaper mentions the League of the Communists’ statement that “it cannot accept the concept of ideologically neutral school nor the school pluralism.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ HDA, the Committee, box 125, Minister assistant Ivo Frol’s directives on personal issues of educational workers and teachers of religion from September 1945 with the Committee’s official letter to the Catechist Society 814/45 from 17th October 1945; the Presidency of the Bishop’s Conferences official letter 106/BK from 20th September 1945.

¹⁰¹ HDA, the Committee, box 127, 599/46. Official letter of Josip Pelc, a catechist from Osijek, to the Committee. He sent a request to Ministry of Education on 7th November 1945. Until 3rd April 04 1946 he did not receive a reply.

¹⁰² Čedomir Višnjić, *Partizansko ljetovanje* (Zagreb: Prosvjeta, 2003), 89.

¹⁰³ Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945-1970.*, 2 vol, 140.

¹⁰⁴ Siniša Zrinščak, “Odnos Crkve i države u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1990. godine”, *Religija i sloboda*, (1993), 115.

¹⁰⁵ *Crkva i politika u samoupravnom društvu* (Zagreb 1967) Esad Ćimić’s discussion, 111.

¹⁰⁶ Ljudevit Plačko, “Marksistička ideologizacija i odgojno-obrazovni sustav u Hrvatskoj nakon II. svjetskog rata”, *Religija i sloboda* (1993), 174 – 175.

¹⁰⁷ *Varaždinske vijesti* (9th December 1972), cited in: *Glas Koncila* (7th January 1973) 12.

Glagoliticism, meeting the East, Byzantium and the Orthodoxy, Slavic unity - particular interest in these and other similar subjects was expected in educational plan of the Faculty of Theology in Zagreb. Some of the Church structures disapproved of that policy and Old Slavic culture was perceived with suspicion, in other words, as an aspect of overpowering of the Orthodox and Serbian element in culture.¹⁰⁸

The press

The Church press was suppressed abruptly, through efficient methods of confiscation, threat and boycott. Immediately after seizing the power, the Communists aggressively and rapidly dispossessed Zagreb Archbishopric of its printing office, deprived it of paper distribution, prohibited printing without approvals, the issuing of which was always purposely delayed. The authorities withheld the paper for printing the religious publications, catechisms, brochures, books and similar writings; posing obstructions even when the community had its own paper supplies. The sole possibility of the existence of publications without the Party's supervision was perceived as a threat to the new order. All of the hundred pre-war Catholic magazines and newspapers were shut down. However, in 1960s, after signing of the Protocols, media blockade was gradually run, which enabled the Catholics in Croatia to publish 134 periodicals until 1987. During the period of liberalization of relations with the religious communities in 1960s, the leading religious newspapers, such as *Glas Koncila* in 1962 and *Pravoslavlje* in 1967, started publishing.

The Catholic press had more of a mass character compared to the Orthodox; it was more available to the readers and had greater circulation. Christmas edition of newspapers *Glas Koncila* in 1969 was published in 245,000 copies and the regular circulation reached the number of 179,000 copies per edition. In 1969, the same publisher issued the first long play record with the spiritual chansons in Croatia ("Žeteoci" - "Harvesters").¹⁰⁹ Due to the higher standard and the better quality of life, the last decade of the Communist regime in Yugoslavia brought about more mass character and visual improvement of all religious communities' publications. The Catholics often polemized with the Communism, introduced new laws, published meaningful and interesting writings on subjects of religion from all around Europe. Only in 1980 *Glas Koncila* gave scope to *the red brigades* and interviewed Paolo Rossi, Luciano Pavarotti, Dino Zoff, Roman Polanski, actress Giulietta Masina, Kevin Keegen etc.

¹⁰⁸ Srećko M. Džaja, *Politička realnost jugoslavenstva* (Sarajevo - Zagreb: Svjetlo Riječi, 2004), 63.

¹⁰⁹ http://www.glas-koncila.hr/impresum_3.html

Conclusion

The most dangerous ideological opponent to the Communist regime of the Second Yugoslavia was the Catholic Church, which from the beginning had the stigma of disobedience and posed a threat to the normalization of the situation in the state. The Church representatives were unrelenting and disinclined towards collaboration with the regime. The Catholic Church opposed the civil marriage. In the first few years it still had hopes that the State would provide for priests' salaries, and for selective acknowledgment of possibility for spiritual guidance in the army and at the hospitals and prisons. The authorities did not allow that. On the other hands, the authorities' treatment of the Church was a great unpleasant surprise and a big shift for the Church. The Orthodox were to a point discredited by their collaboration with the Chetniks, but were not liquidated, because the Party's leadership perceived the Church's conduct in war as patriotic. The pressure was still successfully applied, so that SPC soon became passive, accepting the authorities and the State.

The Evangelics did not engage in politics by their nature and their effective influence was small; the most negligible was the number of the Muslims in NR Croatia.

The Jewish religious community was gravely inflicted during the war, but it managed to meet the religious as well as other social needs of its few believers.

The State persecuted the religious communities in many ways, namely executing and intimidating the clergy and confiscating or damaging their property. Dedicated believers were treated in the same way. The Churches, especially the Catholic Church, would have been ready to agree to confiscations if their seminaries had remained intact. From 1953 to 1964 the pressure decreased. The situation was normalized in the 1960s and the liberalization of the public life enabled the Church to perform different pastoral activities, as the press and publications of the Society *Kršćanska sadašnjost* show. By signing *the Protocols* in 1966 the Church acknowledged Yugoslavia and its legislation as competent and the clergy in emigration was excluded from the negotiations. The religious communities remained the bearers of the collective national identity until the last days of Yugoslavia, as was particularly actualised in their media in the 1980s, especially radically and unrelentingly in the Orthodox religious community.

Translated by Ida Ljubić

Religionsgemeinschaften in Kroatien zwischen 1945-1991

Gesellschaftliche Ursachen der Auseinandersetzungen zwischen kommunistischen Behörden und den Führungen von Religionsgemeinschaften

Zusammenfassung

In der vorliegenden Arbeit wird die Lage der Religionsgemeinschaften in Kroatien im kommunistischen Jugoslawien in der Zeit zwischen 1945 und 1991 untersucht. Die gesellschaftlichen Ursachen des Nichtverstehens zwischen Kommunisten und Gläubigen haben ihre Wurzeln in früheren Epochen. Obwohl die Priester im Laufe der Kriegsoperationen zurückhaltend waren und nicht dazu geneigt waren, sich in den blutigen Krieg einzumischen, wurden sie oft ohne Gerichtsprozess getötet oder in montierten Prozessen zum Tode verurteilt. Genauso waren die Unterstützung der Partisanen und Widersetzen dem Faschismus keine Garantie dafür, dass sie nach dem Krieg nicht getötet werden oder nicht zur mehrjährigen Freiheitsstrafe verurteilt werden konnten. Durch materielle Verarmung waren die Kommunisten bestrebt, den kirchlichen Einfluss in der Gesellschaft abzuschwächen. Aus diesem Grund konfiszierten sie in einigen Nachkriegsjahren 80 % des Eigentums der Religionsgemeinschaften über Grundstücke und Immobilien. Von dieser materiellen Verarmung wurde insbesondere die Serbische Orthodoxe Kirche betroffen, die dadurch immer mehr in Abhängigkeit von den Behörden geriet. Die Intensität der Verfolgungen der "Gläubigen" in der Nachkriegszeit verlief in vielerlei Hinsicht gleich. Nachdem die Kommunisten die Macht ergriffen hatten, änderten sie die gesamte Gesellschaftsstruktur und die bisherigen Verhaltensmuster. In die eigenen Hände übernahmen sie alle Hebel von Macht und Gewalt. Sie versuchten, die Religionsgemeinschaften durch Druck und Zugeständnisse zu neutralisieren. Von Anfang an deklarierte sich die Katholische Kirche als Hauptgegner und größter ideologischer Feind des Regimes. Die Orthodoxen waren besonders empfindlich und die Behörden setzten sie schnell unter Aufsicht und Kontrolle, die anderen waren im Hinblick auf die Zahl belanglos, um eine bedeutendere Rolle zu spielen. Als es den Behörden misslang, unter den Bischöfen regierungstreue Leute zu finden, versuchten sie durch Zwietracht in kirchlichen Reihen den Gegner abzuschwächen. Ein besonderer Versuch in dieser Hinsicht war, eine Vereinigung der Priester zu gründen, die der Regierung und Partei treu wären, aber außer in Istrien, spielte diese Vereinigung keine bedeutende Rolle. Mit der Zeit wurden diese Vereinigungen passiv. Mehr Erfolg erzielte diese Politik der Gründung von Vereinigungen bei orthodoxen Priestern. Der Tod von Kardinal Alojzije Stepinac und das Zweite Konzil von Vatikan ändern die Beziehungen zwischen Staat und Kirche in Jugoslawien / Kroatien. Mit der Zeit lässt der Druck nach, die Verfolgungen sind immer seltener, aber manche öffentliche Dienste wie beispielsweise Schulwesen oder die professionellen Streitkräfte waren für die Gläubigen auch weiterhin unzugänglich. Sich als Atheist zu deklarieren, war gesellschaftlich erwünscht. Die Liberalisierung der Gesellschaft lässt sich besonders an der kirchlichen Verlagstätigkeit beobachten, die sich seit den sechziger Jahren im ständigen Aufstieg befindet.