

# SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH IN CROATIA

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*Stjepan Baloban*

UDK 304.9:282(497.5)

## 0. *Introduction*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the Christian social teaching or social teaching of the Church used to hold an important place in some western countries, especially Germany and Austria. Without the rich tradition of the Christian social teaching, it would have been hard to develop social market economy in Germany. In the transitional turmoil in Croatia the question about the significance and meaning of the social teaching of the Church is inevitable. This paper, entitled *Social Teaching of the Church in Croatia*, does not aim at giving a complete picture of the social teaching of the Church in Croatia but highlights the main features of the activities undertaken by Christians and the Church in the public life of the transitional Croatia. In respect to this, Croatia is specific in many ways if compared to other transitional countries and particularly to certain western countries with a tradition of the Christian social teaching (Baloban, 2002). These specific features are a result of the position of the Church in the Croatian society during the communist era following the World War II as well as the period following the 1990 democratic changes. According to the latest 2001 census, 87.83% of the Croatian citizens declare they are Catholics (Republika Hrvatska, 2001). It is hard to establish what the actual influence of the Christians and the Church is in the Croatian society, but even a superficial glance at the social and political situation in Croatia shows that the Church holds a specific place in its social and political life. From this context an important question follows: how well-known and possibly effective is the social teaching of the Church within the Church itself and the Croatian society? While seeking the answer to this question, the following topics are elaborated: Name and Short History of the Social Teaching

\* Lecture give at the symposium on social market economy held in Zagreb on November 15, 2002, under the auspices of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Hans-Siedel-Stiftung and the Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus in Zagreb.

of the Church, An Interest in Social Teaching of the Church after 1990, Barriers of Inherited Mentality and Does Croatia in Transition Need a Social Offer of the Church? This approach is, on one hand, based on the examination of social problems in Croatia and, on the other, on several years' empirical work on the promotion of the social teaching of the Church in Croatia.

### 1. *Name and Short History*

At present two terms prevail in Croatia: “socijalni nauk Crkve” and “društveni nauk Crkve”. (The English translation for both is the same: “social teaching of the Church”). The term “social teaching of the Church (socijalni nauk Crkve)” is most commonly used, although in certain articles one can also come across the term “Catholic social teaching” or, more rarely, “Christian social teaching”. In the Croatian theology there has been no thorough discussion over the name of *doctrina socialis Ecclesiae* (Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, no. 20), which appeared in the social teaching of the Church during the 1950s and developed during the 1960s. As a theological subject it has been lectured at the Catholic Theological Faculty at the Zagreb University under different names: Catholic Church Teaching, Catholic Sociology, Catholic Social Teaching — Catholic Sociology and Social Teaching of the Church. In March 2000, the chair of the Social Teaching of the Church<sup>1</sup> was established at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the Zagreb University, the formation of which is another indicator of a recent interest in the social teaching of the Church in Croatia.

Unlike Germany (Hengsbach, Edmunds, Möhring–Hesse, 1993) and Italy (Sorge, 1996), where there are scientific disputes over the name, as concrete application in the society is related to it, there are no such disputes in Croatia.

There has been no theological discussion over the name in Croatia most likely because the Church and theology had other priorities during the communist era (1945–1990), and the topic as such was not desirable in the communist system, as the communist leadership, or the system as such, was officially in charge of dealing with social problems.

The answer to the question why the discussion on the name did not follow the 1990 democratic changes in Croatia should be sought in two facts: 1. Along with the arrival of John Paul II and his active commitment to writing and promoting the content of the social teaching of the Church, the emphasis is placed on the contents, while the name as such holds no longer such importance, i. e. it simply remains — the social teaching of the Church (“socijalni”

1 See the Decision of the Council of the Catholic Theological Faculty from March 31, 2000 in *Minutes of the 6th regular meeting of the Faculty Council*, Zagreb, April 14, 2000, p. 8.

or “društveni”) (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 41). 2. In the post-1990 transitional Croatia a great interest suddenly arises in the social teaching as such, especially in the society, so main attention is paid to the examination and promotion of the social teaching of the Church, mostly based on the social documents of the Church. It seems as if this relatively small number of expert theologians who deal with this subject “have no time” to deal with the name itself as they have other priorities regarding the social teaching of the Church.<sup>2</sup> In Croatia the focus is put on the contents of the social teaching and its concrete implementation within the Church as well as in the society. Since the term “social teaching of the Church” prevails in Croatia, this term will be used in this paper.

In order to understand the present situation regarding the problem we are discussing, it is necessary to illustrate briefly the historical situation. According to its geographical and cultural position Croatia is a Central European and Mediterranean country (Šakić, *Kaliterna Lipovčan*, 2001). It is visible not only from its long-lasting historical connections but is also confirmed by the interest shown in the social problems of the Christians and the Church in Croatia. Only six years after Adolf Kolping established the “Kolping Society” in Köln in 1849, the “Djetečko društvo” was formed in Zagreb in 1855, and in 1856 Adolf Kolping visited Zagreb on his tour of Europe (Kolarić, 2001).

After the first social encyclical of the pope Leo XIII “*Rerum novarum*” (May 15, 1891), the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the World War II in the Croatian theology and Church was strongly marked by social problems, whether in the form of organizing big meetings<sup>3</sup>, social weeks<sup>4</sup>, launching social publications, writing books or launching social sequences. Unfortunately, this social dimension of faith and, generally, the social presence of the Christians in public life in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has not been scientifically explored to the sufficient extent yet<sup>5</sup> nor are the citizens aware of it at present. However, we may conclude from the numerous social activities

2 There are very few theologians dealing with the social teaching of the Church. And those dealing with this subject are ‘very busy’ both in the Church and public appearances in the society where it is spoken and written on the social teaching of the Church in different ways and different contexts.

3 Following the example of other nations, the Croatians organize two Catholic meetings (in 1900 and 1913), see Korenić, 1900 and Šimrak 1913.

4 From 1932 to 1940 four social weeks were held in Zagreb. See Baloban, 1997: 23

5 A few seminars on the subject that I had with students at the Catholic Theological Faculty showed that these social problems were unjustifiably neglected in historical analyses as well as in theological papers. Numerous papers have been published dealing with this historical period but there is a lack of papers that would demonstrate an integral approach to this problem. The most recent and very important work is: Lay Council of the CBC, Matijević, 2002.

in Croatia preceding the World War II that in this area the Croatian Catholics followed closely the events in the world and Church in general. A big change was brought about by the establishment of the communist Yugoslavia in 1945, when all the activities of the Catholic Church in the social area were abruptly interrupted: the work of lay congregations was stopped, the Catholic press was abolished and a time began during which the Christians and Catholics were required to live their faith exclusively in their “private life” or within the church premises. The social dimension of faith and Christianity was removed from the public, primarily by administrative measures. While in Germany it was precisely after the World War II that the social teaching of the Church developed (social academies, various lay congregations, and a dispute on the role of the Christians in community and politics), in Croatia it was the beginning of the “empty-space” era regarding the social teaching of the Church. At theological schools the social teaching of the Church did not get its proper place either.

After the Second Vatican Council certain changes took place in Croatia, regarding the Christians and the Catholic Church, but the situation regarding the practising of the social dimension of faith in the society did not change significantly. Different spiritual and charismatic movements appeared, which could act in public because they mainly exerted influence on the deepening of the personal faith and family life (Baloban, 1997: 109–122). During the 1980s we recorded an increasing number of theological papers and articles dealing with certain aspects of the social teaching of the Church, but these were mostly papers at the theoretical level.

## *2. Interest for the Social Teaching of the Church after 1990*

Following the 1990 democratic changes in Croatia a different atmosphere in the society started to be created regarding the Christians and the Church. What used to be forbidden for 45 years is no longer forbidden, moreover an active presence of the Christians is as from now wanted in the public life. Not only that, but in a general atmosphere of disorientation during the hard transition period and the imposed war (1991–1995), which should by no means be forgotten, the Christians and the Church are expected to take an active part. Due to the 1945 abrupt interruption of all organized social activities of the Christians by the authorities, following the 1990 historical turn of events there is a serious lack of “structures” in Croatia as well as of a sufficient number of “professionals”, especially laymen, with an education and empirical work as the Christians in public life. The Christians, who were not allowed for 45 years to act in the society as Christians, should all of a sudden become “leaders” of a new society in economy, politics, media, in education... Since a large

majority of the Croatian citizens trusts the Church at that moment, great help is generally expected from the Church and the Christians. This is even more stressed by the then official policy which is aware of the hard heritage of the past and expects great help from the Church. We can say today that these expectations were not realistic and did not take into account the 45 years of lagging behind the world in this area.

In such a situation, on May 15, 1991 the Catholic Theological Faculty in Zagreb organizes a “social academy” on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the first social Encyclical Letter “*Rerum novarum*”, where the social teaching of the Church is introduced publicly in the newly-founded state of Croatia for the first time (Miklenić, 1991). On this occasion the book entitled “A Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching” was presented, i. e. all important social documents were published for the first time in Croatian (Valković, 1991). The Croatian citizens in general, but also believers all of a sudden reveal that there is such a thing as social teaching of the Church speaking of labour, trade unions, Christians in politics, economy, entrepreneurship, profit...

Very quickly a conviction is created in the Croatian society that the Catholic Church has its own social teaching, which is in this or that way also present in other countries populated by Catholics. This is, in the opinion of the Croatian citizens, something good that can help the development of the Croatian society. Trade unions, employers, managers and business people in general are all interested in the social teaching of the Church. The social teaching of the Church is also at one moment, although unjustifiably, seen as a “magic wand”.

The greatest problem is that this “good and positive thing”, i. e. the social teaching of the Church, as a “great mystery”, is not known either among Christians or among the citizens in community.

At the very beginning a basic problem appears: civil servants and public officials, especially politicians, regardless of their conviction and political orientation, invoke the social documents and social teaching of the Church in general, without knowing it sufficiently or at all.

Did the Christians and the Church respond adequately in the early 1990s to such a great interest in the social teaching of the Church in the Croatian society? Today, after a certain period of time has passed, we may say that at the beginning of this period there was no organized response. The reason lay, on one hand, in the fact that the social teaching of the Church was not known well and, on the other, in the fact that a war was soon imposed on Croatia. In the difficult war conditions there were other priorities, primarily hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and refugees (Jurčević, 2000). However, even in such hard war circumstances we can speak of gradual familiarization with and spreading of the social teaching of the Church. In spite of the mentioned difficulties, it can be noticed that since 1991 there has been a gradual development of the interest in the social teaching of the Church at the theoretical as well as practical level.

## 2.1. Theoretical level

The theoretical level can be seen from individual lectures, expert and scientific congresses, bigger or smaller articles in journals as well as newspaper articles. Everything said or written with respect to the social teaching of the Church is “welcome”.

The social teaching of the Church was only too desirable as it was expected that it could change the things in the society for the better. Theologians have thus held various lectures on ethics in economy, ethics in business and the codes of ethical behaviour.<sup>6</sup> The Croatian Employers' Association organizes the symposium entitled “Ethical Standards and Business Morals in Economic Relationships”, where speeches will be made not only by businessmen, but also professional economists, sociologists and theologians (Croatian Employers' Association).

It is not possible to list here all those activities and all expert and professional papers in theological periodicals such as: *Politička misao* (Political Thought), *Filozofska istraživanja* (Philosophical Research), *Revija za socijalnu politiku* (Social Policy Journal) (Valković, 1994).

All of these are individual attempts that are still very important for the development of the Croatian transitional society. A role at the theoretical level has also been played by the Catholic weekly “*Glas Koncila* (Voice of the Council)”, which apart from recording faithfully what happens in this area in Croatia also publishes larger or smaller texts of various authors on social topics.

A good response was achieved among the scientific public by two socioreligious researches, conducted by the Catholic Theological Faculty of the Zagreb University in cooperation with the Centre for Promoting the Social Teaching of the Church: *Faith and Morals in Croatia* (1997–1998), led by prof. Marijan Valković, Ph. D. and *European Value Study* (1999), led by prof. Josip Baloban, Ph. D., where social issues are elaborated too.

At the theoretical level the statements of the Croatian Bishops' Conference should be mentioned as well as the individual statements of Croatian bishops and the statements of the “*Iustitia et pax*” Commission. These statements mostly refer to war happenings and the establishment of peace, but also mention some social issues.

So far no analysis has been carried out of this theoretical level of the spreading of the social teaching of the Church in Croatia. What can be concluded even without such an analysis is that following the 1990 democratic changes a lot was written as well as scientifically and professionally discussed regarding different topics related to the social teaching of the Church.

6 The Catholic weekly “*Glas koncila*” has faithfully recorded most such events. The social press also occasionally dealt with those events. As an example, we can mention an interview in the magazine named *Banka* (Bank), entitled “*Business and Sin*”, Baloban 1995)

## 2.2. Practical level

The practical level of the spreading of the social teaching of the Church goes in two directions: a) founding lay congregations or associations of a social orientation and b) incentives by the official Church through its institutions.

Urged by a general atmosphere in the society and the Church, certain lay congregations and associations are formed implementing and invoking in their programs the social teaching of the Church. Let us mention some of them: Catholic Association “Kap dobrote (Drop of Goodness)”; Kolping — Katoličko društvo djetića (Kolping Catholic Society); Croatian Association of Catholic Businessmen, Association of St. Vincent de Paul; Association of Croatian Catholic Men “Pope John VIII”. Some other lay associations also demonstrate through their programs an interest in the social teaching of the Church, for instance the Croatian Catholic Society of Nurses and Medical Technicians and Croatian Catholic Society of Teaching Staff (Eterović, 2002: 759–769.) After initial difficulties, some of these societies function better while others are still searching for their identity and spiritual quality which would be appropriate to them.

Looking at the official Church in Croatia, it is important to stress at least two things. First, three big meetings of laymen organized by the Lay Council of the Croatian Bishops’ Conference, i. e. Commission for Laymen. These were “Assembly of the Croatian laymen” in 1992 where the role and place of laymen in the Church and society were discussed (Lay Council of the Croatian Bishops’ Conference, 1993), Study days of the Croatian laymen in 1995 on the subject of the Church, democracy and general well-being in Croatia (Lay Council of the Croatian Bishops’ Conference, 1995) and Symposium on the possibilities of organized action of laymen in Croatia held in 2001 (Lay Council of the Croatian Bishops’ Conference, 2002).

Although in Croatia superficial judgments are so easily uttered, saying that after these great gatherings no great changes have followed, I believe that these large gatherings of laymen have had a positive influence on the public primarily, within the Church as well as society. What has failed to happen is tangible implementation in descending to the lower levels, i. e. dioceses, parishes and individual lay congregations. In this sense more is expected from the latest Symposium on the possibility of organized action of laymen in the Croatian Church, held in Osijek in 2001.

Second, one of the most important things that the official Church has done for the promotion of the social teaching of the Church is founding the “Centre for promoting the social teaching of the Church at the Croatian Bishops’ Conference”, which was formed in 1996 and began its work in 1997 (Centre for promoting the social teaching of the Church, 1998). Thanks to the financial support of “Renovabis” the Centre has been able to develop different activities: social discussions, organizing international symposiums, various lectures, publishing books and booklets on social topics such as: A Christian

in Public Life, Christianity, Church and Politics, Challenges of the Civil Society in Croatia, Croatian Family at a Turning Point, or the latest title: Social Future of Croatia<sup>7</sup>. One of the major activities of the Centre is organizing occasional gatherings of junior researchers and teaching assistants with a wish to familiarize them with the social teaching of the Church.

The Centre joined forces with the Croatian Caritas in 2002, launching the “Project of monitoring poverty in Croatia”.

### 3. *Barriers of inherited mentality*

A question is rightfully asked about what the effect has been of the above mentioned activities in the area of the social teaching of the Church on the concrete life of the Croatian believers and the Croatian society in general. When answering this very important question one should take into account the inherited mentality. In the social and economic development of Croatia the consequences of living in the former communist system (1945–1990) are increasingly coming to light. “Forma mentis”, the way of thinking created for 45 years and permeating all state and social structures, but also the individual personality, changes hard, and without this change there will be no change in the way of life and behaviour. Recent empirical studies show what ordinary people feel and what is visible in the media: the democratic changes and the establishment of the independent state have not been accompanied by changes in the way of public life and behaviour. This primarily refers to disrespect for and evasion of the law as well as different forms of unethical and immoral behaviour. In fact, it is about social morality, which is strictly divided from everyday individual morality. This reflects on the Christians as well, so we may speak of the Sunday Christians and the all-week Christians. In other words, so many Christians try to live their faith on Sundays and other church holidays personally, ecclesiastically and outwards. Over the week, especially at work, they find it hard to resist all kinds of challenges, especially the challenges of social morality. This fact is confirmed by the results of more recent empirical studies conducted by the Catholic Theological Faculty in cooperation with the Centre for promoting the social teaching of the Church.<sup>8</sup>

7 Out of the seven books published so far let us mention two: Baloban, 2000 and Baloban, 2001.

8 The information is taken from the research on “Faith and Morality in Croatia”, conducted on the general population of the Croatian citizens from November 15, 1997 till January 10, 1998. A partial report was published in the *Bogoslovska smotra* (Theological Journal), 1998. After that a research was conducted on university students in 1999, high-school students in 1999/2000 and university professors in 2001. Part of the results obtained has already been published, and a large part is published here for the first time.



We are presenting some results of the studies speaking in a wider sense of social morality and contributing to the inherited mentality analysis.

TABLE 1. *Certain immoral behaviour forms in public life*

For each of the mentioned behaviours you should estimate to what extent it can be justified. "1" indicates that the mentioned behaviour can never be justified, and "5" that it can always be justified. Numbers "4" and "5" are merged in the table into the behaviours that *mostly* can be justified.

BEHAVIOURS (%)	general population (97/98)	general population up to the age of 35 (97/98)	high-school students (99/00)	university students (99)	university professors (01)
understating the tax report	27	33	32	47	13.8
buying stolen goods	12	19	28	36	5.4
keeping found money	16	26	44	53	11.1
using public transportation without paying	30	45	59	73	16.5
taking bribe	8	12	16	13	1.5
not reporting after damaging a parked car	12	17	29	31	5.4
throwing rubbish where inappropriate	8	11	24	17	5.4
driving under the influence of alcohol	5	9	15	16	1.5

Table 1 involves general population, general population up to the age of 35, high-school students, university students and university professors.

It is quite obvious from the results that younger people are less radical, and more conforming, i. e. considerably "more permissive", which means they are readier to justify morally these, traditionally speaking, immoral behaviours. While 12% of the general population in Croatia is ready to justify the buying of the stolen goods, 28% of high-school students and even 36% of students justify such a procedure. The discrepancy is even more prominent in case of keeping the found money. While 16% of the general population justifies such a procedure, 44% of high-school students and 53% of university students are ready to keep the found money and obviously not return it to the owner. When one considers readiness to bribe, which is also considerably higher among younger than among older people, one must come to the conclusion that younger generations are more prone to unethical behaviours in public life. Besides the burden of the consequences of the previous mentality,

which were passed on to younger generations through upbringing and education, one should also add up here the consequences and the burden of war happenings as well as a visible shift of the younger generation towards pragmatism and materialism (Črpić, Valković, 2000: 24–29). On the other hand, what is also considerably present is the justifying of tax evasion, which shows undeveloped conscience of the general well-being, but also the state of anomie, i. e. disrespect of legalities, evasion of the law. In the former state, resistance to the then authorities was shown, among other methods, by evading the law or by violating certain behaviour standards. After the 1990 democratic changes the situation changed, the Croatian citizens got their state, but there has been no visible change in the style of behaviour, mentality that is an inert creation remaining the same for long and changing very slowly. In the conscience of the Croatian citizens the democratic way of thinking and acting is slowly taking root. In the same way, a positive and necessary attitude to the general well-being is developing too slowly. The general well-being thus suffers and there is a failure in achieving at least the minimum of citizens' responsibility for what is common.

Bribing is one of big problems in the functioning of a society, particularly Croatian society. The following table speaks of the attitude towards bribing.

TABLE 2. *On what occasions do you find it wise to offer bribe?*

During the survey a five-degree scale was used, where "1" meant "don't agree at all" and "5" — "totally agree". In the presented table the options "4" (mostly agree) and "5" (totally agree) have been merged.

BRIBING OPPORTUNITIES (%)	general population (97/98)	general population up to the age of 35 (97/98)	general population up to the age of 24 (97/98)	high-school students (99/00)	university students (99)	university professors (01)
when seeing a doctor	29	31	37	21	27	8.4
when entering a better school or university	22	22	24	39	25	3.4
during a visit by the financial police	13	19	25	20	20	0.4
when a policeman stops you for a traffic offence	16	21	26	40	37	5.4
in order to speed up an administrative procedure	27	33	40	48	45	13.4
when handing in your tax report	11	15	20	20	19	0.8
relating to church officials	6	5	4	5	5	0.8

The same tendency we had earlier can only be confirmed with regard to bribing. Younger people are readier for socially deviant behaviours, they are generally considerably readier to offer bribe than university professor or general population. It is certainly a worrying tendency, if not alarming, as these young people, especially when speaking of university students, will tomorrow be the holders of certain leading positions in the society, will be *opinion makers*. Due to the transitional and war problems Croatia found itself in, this part of the population was neglected and is developing in the direction of socially quite unacceptable behaviours. It is precisely these young people we need to take into account and offer them a prospect of possible ethical realization of social relationships (Črpić, 2000).

TABLE III. *Attitude to standards and values*

People think differently on certain life realities. The claims that follow speak of some of them.

Would you please judge to what extent you agree or disagree with the listed claims.

*During the survey a five-degree scale was used, where "1" meant "don't agree at all" and "5" — "totally agree". In the presented table the options "4" (mostly agree) and "5" (totally agree) have been merged.*

STANDARDS AND VALUES (%)	general population (97/98)	university students (99)	high-school students (99/00)
One should work according to how well he is paid	41.4	33.2	46.1
Nowadays it is not wise to report all the tax	34.4	41.8	40.9
Honesty is always the best policy	71.2	49.3	58.5
You should give others only if you have enough	22.5	19.3	31.8
You are not bound to help someone in trouble if it puts you in danger	15.2	11.7	17.3
Beggars should not be given money but be forced to work	32.6	30.3	32.9
Some things may be taken from the company if the owner does not pay you properly	17.3	17.2	21.3
If one does not return what he owes you, you may as well take it by force	10.6	17.0	20.8

The results obtained in Table 3 show that over 40% of the Croatian citizens and high-school students think that their commitment at work depends

mostly on material compensations, on the salary. It is a bit less prominent with university students but this materialistic criterion is considerably present with them too. What is actually the problem? The mentioned information speaks of the attitude to work having its roots again in the former mentality. In communism, more precisely, a popular slogan was: “No one can pay me as little as I can work”. This is obviously a trace of the inherited mentality, which in the war and transitional conditions adapted well to the new situation and which we are going to encounter for a long time. In this context it is possible to search for the causes of a poor “entrepreneurship climate” in Croatia and, generally speaking, the problems in transformation and privatization of ownership patterns. This is, however, not meant to be an excuse for all those manipulations and immoral behaviours that were present during transformation and privatization of ownership patterns and that only make the development of entrepreneur’s mentality harder.

As for *whether honesty pays*, we are faced with an obvious erosion of the value — the younger are much more sceptical in this respect, especially university students, only 49.3% of whom believe that honesty always pays. Certain stinginess and lack of solidarity are particularly obvious among high-school students and in their attitude to a possibility of giving and sharing. Almost a third of high-school students believe that it is necessary to provide for oneself first, and then possibly share the surplus with others.

The results show an obvious problem regarding social morality in man’s life, i. e. man’s moral or immoral behaviour in public life.

Lately in Croatia an opinion has often been heard saying that the desired changes for the better in the society will only take place when the positions and power are taken by younger generations, that are not so affected by the “communist mentality”. Surveys, however, question this thesis, showing that it is necessary to initiate a public dispute on the issues mentioned in this section.

Can the social teaching of the Church help in this context? I think it can, primarily by stressing the importance of overcoming the individualist ethics and linking individual and social ethics, which was particularly discussed at the Second Vatican Council.

In the “*Gaudium et spes*” document, no. 30, the Council addresses an appeal to all people not to be content with mere individualist ethics, but to pay special attention to moral behaviour in public life, i. e. social morality. The appeal is concrete. There are those who “live as if they did not care at all about the needs of the society ... do not care at all about social laws and regulations... who do not hesitate to evade taxes or other duties toward the society resorting for this to various tricks and frauds... belittle some rules of social life, for in-

stance those dealing with health care or traffic regulations” (*Gaudium et spes*, 30: 659).

#### 4. *Does the transitional Croatia need the social offer of the Church?*

The question is rightfully asked to what extent the social offer of the Church can help the Croatian society and state in the times of transition and globalization. After the 1990 democratic changes and, especially during war, a number of non-government and other organizations arrived in Croatia with an intention to help this or that way. One of the main tasks of these non-government organizations (NGOs) was the creation of civil society in Croatia.

Studies have been recently carried out in Croatia about civil society and, generally, about the efficiency of these foreign organizations (Bežovan, 2000; Bežovan, 2001).

The results obtained are very interesting: a civil society has not managed to come to life in Croatia yet. Moreover, in the public a negative attitude prevails towards NGOs, and those trying to develop a civil society in Croatia recommend not to use the term NGOs but the term “civil society organizations”. Why such a negative attitude towards NGOs? It is obvious that these associations, coming from abroad, mostly have not succeeded in “reading” and “understanding” the Croatian situation, and this partly also depends on the people sent from abroad and their real intentions.

These NGOs tended to cooperate with people from the former communist system, i. e. with those people who held certain positions in that system as well. A relatively small number of NGOs and associations cooperated with church organizations, i. e. associations of laymen in Church. Church organizations were unjustifiably evaded and very easily labelled with negative labels.

What should be done in Croatia to gradually change the mentality that we have inherited? I believe that the Catholic Church through its social teaching may be great help in changing this mentality, not only for its believers but for all citizens. There are two reasons I would like to confirm my thesis with: 1. the rich and modern content of the social teaching which should be turned into a social offer for the Croatian circumstances and 2. trust in the Catholic Church.

TABLE IV. *Trust in movements and institutions*

During the survey a four-degree scale was used, where “1” meant “no trust at all” and “4” — “great trust”. In the presented table the options “3” (quite a lot of trust) and “4” (great trust) have been merged.

MOVEMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS	general population (97/98) %	ranking	general population aged 25-35 (97-98) %	ranking	general population aged 18-24 (97/98) %	ranking	high-school students (99/00) %	ranking	university students (99) %	ranking
School	87	<b>3</b>	79	<b>4</b>	81	<b>1</b>	66	5	71	<b>3</b>
Army	85	<b>2</b>	79	<b>2</b>	71	5	65	6	59	5
Police	77	<b>4</b>	67	6	58	7	51	10	39	13
Church	85	<b>1</b>	84	<b>1</b>	73	<b>2</b>	75	<b>2</b>	63	<b>4</b>
Law, courts	61	7	57	8	55	9	46	13	28	15
Newspapers	23	<u>21</u>	21	<u>22</u>	17	<u>22</u>	24	<u>20</u>	25	16
Independent weeklies	25	<u>22</u>	26	<u>21</u>	22	<u>21</u>	23	<u>21</u>	30	14
TV	32	<u>19</u>	26	<u>20</u>	26	<u>20</u>	40	14	23	18
State radio	34	18	29	<u>19</u>	26	<u>19</u>	37	15	22	19
Local radio stations	47	12	52	10	50	10	49	12	55	7
Croatian Catholic Radio	57	8	56	7	55	8	50	10	50	9
Government of the Republic of Croatia	49	11	44	14	36	17	27	<u>21</u>	13	<u>22</u>
New private companies	32	<u>20</u>	36	18	28	16	29	17	18	<u>21</u>
State-owned companies	50	10	49	11	39	12	31	18	25	17
Trade unions	40	17	43	12	36	13	32	16	35	12
Croatian Parliament	41	16	40	14	29	18	27	<u>19</u>	19	<u>20</u>
UN	43	15	42	17	33	14	57	7	44	11
European Community	44	14	45	14	38	11	56	8	50	8
NATO	44	13	43	12	30	15	53	9	47	10
Environmental movement	71	6	78	<b>3</b>	69	<b>4</b>	69	<b>3</b>	75	<b>2</b>
Human Rights movement	70	5	73	5	73	<b>3</b>	76	<b>1</b>	76	<b>1</b>
Women's movement	57	9	54	9	57	6	62	<b>4</b>	52	6

In all the mentioned studies the Church ranks among the top four trustworthy institutions. Apart from the Church, there is also school, while the other institutions vary depending on the population questioned: army, police, Human Rights movement, environmental movement, women's movement.

Therefore, there is trust in Church among the citizens. What remains is a very important question whether the Christians and the Church will justify this trust or not! The social area is precisely the field where a lot is expected from Christians and the Church. This area is an imperative of the moment as well as an imperative of the future development of the Croatian Church.

The social offer of the Church is still current today in all parts of the world. The question is how this social offer of the Church is applied to a concrete situation in certain societies. It is expected from theologians, social ethicists, bishops and laymen in general dealing with the social teaching of the Church, to lower this generalized offer expressed in the social documents to the level of the concrete social ethics (Valković, 2001: 128). Here I can see major disadvantages, or more precisely, Croatia lacks such documents at all levels.

This is a concrete example where the lack of "experts" in the field of the social teaching of the Church can be seen, no matter whether it is priests, theologians or laymen that live and work in the community.

One of the main tasks in the future is merging individual and social ethics. In this context, more work should be invested in the social spirituality which is only in its infancy in Croatia. The former communist system was favourable to the development of individual spirituality in the Church stressing individual morality having as a paradigm the famous thought "Save Your Soul". In such an atmosphere different spiritual movements also developed in Croatia whose spirituality mostly referred to the individual and his family, leaving aside man's activism in the society. It is understandable because Christians were in the former communist system pushed into "strict privacy", i. e. faith could only be practised in the family circle and inside the church as a building. A Christian had to leave, so to speak, "his faith" at home when he acted in public. That is how a mentality was formed, in which little thought was given to moral or immoral behaviour in the society, culture, politics, economy... Important decisions in these areas were consciously or unconsciously left to certain social elite supported by the government.

If it is correct that the individual spirituality prevails in Croatia, emphasis then should be put on the social spirituality which will gradually affect the social morality. The Christians are also invited to do so in the Catechism of the Catholic Church from 1992, which in no. 2409 speaks of unethical and immoral behaviours opposing God's seventh commandment: deliberate keeping of the borrowed or lent things or the things that have been lost; cheating in trade; giving unjust salaries; raising prices without any foundation; forging

checks and receipts, badly done works; cheating when reporting the tax base (Croatian Bishops' Conference, 1994: 589–590).

### 5. *Instead of a Conclusion*

Persuasiveness and credibility of the Christians and the Catholic Church in Croatia depends on to what extent the rich content of the social teaching of the Church will manage through all their members: bishops, theologians, priests, monks and nuns but particularly also laymen, to be gradually turned into a concrete social offer and realized reality in the Croatian society.

How aware of it are the Christians and the Church? It is hard to say. Personally, I think that in the official Church the conviction prevails that the social teaching of the Church represents a very important ecclesiastical and social factor but there is a lack of decisiveness to set priorities among numerous “important” matters and engage material means and people accordingly.

The fact is that due to the known past and inherited mentality, the social teaching of the Church in Croatia is still not known well either within the Church or in the society. The media show only an occasional interest in some activities in the area of the social teaching of the Church. There are not enough people who would deal with it professionally, not enough institutions in all parts of Croatia that would structurally support promotion of the social offer of the Church. It is necessary to do both, i. e. found institutions and educate people. More and more young people who are about to graduate from theology are interested in the social teaching of the Church, and show an according interest in the postgraduate studies at the Zagreb Catholic Theological Faculty. These are people from different parts of Croatia that could in the future take over different roles in the Church. Work with young people is also one of the priorities for the Centre for Promoting the Social Teaching of the Church at the Croatian Bishops' Conference. It would be very bad indeed if in the future we had educated people and no ready institutions. If we want the situation in Croatia to change for the better, we must not wait for more convenient times in Croatia but it is necessary to do everything it takes so that people would through the social teaching of the Church too become more responsible and readier to take over the responsibility for the well-being of the society.

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