

CROATIAN CATHOLIC MOVEMENT AND THE CREATION OF THE YUGOSLAV STATE (1912-1918)

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«In His wise providence, in a miraculous manner, God has [...] compressed us into one body. A great day has dawned, and in the sky, a sign has appeared with the inscription S[ERBS] C[ROATS] S[LOVENES]. My people, in this sign you shall win! Croats, Serbs, Slovenes! It is God's will that you remain inseparably united for ever and ever».

Antun Mahnić, «Sveta Stolica i Jugoslaveni», Narodna Politika, 6 November 1919, p. 2.

Introduction

The appearance of the Catholic Movement (Katolički pokret - KP) in Croatia was not an isolated case in the history of the Catholic Church. Such a form of organising of Catholic believers (priests and laymen) was the Church's response to certain phenomena accompanying the creation of a new, liberal civil society, which reached its peak in the 19th century. The bearers of liberal ideology (secular intellectuals, capitalist entrepreneurs, industrialists) perceived the Catholic Church as one of the main bearers and defenders of the old, conservative and feudal society. Therefore, the Catholic Church was exposed to fierce ideological and other forms of attacks and challenges all around Europe.¹ The liberal critique of the Catholic Church was often reduced to the mocking of faith and declaring the clergy to be «retrogressive». The Catholic Church was supposed to be banished from public life – «faith is a private issue».² In their propaganda, liberalist ideologists were abundantly using the press, as the most efficient means in spreading ideas and the creation of public opinion, which they considered very important.³

The liberal civil society imposed on the Catholic Church and its believers the need to create such forms of actions, which would be adapted to the

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¹ Juraj Mataušić, «Hrvatski katolički pokret», in: Darko Deković (ed.), *Bernardin Nikola Škrivanić i njegovo vrijeme* (Rijeka; Matica hrvatska – Ogranak Rijeka, 1997), p. 361.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

new social circumstances. The KP came in to existence in German lands in the end of the first half of the 19th century. Trying to defend themselves from the attacks of the liberal state and its reaching out into, by then, the inviolable terrain of the Catholic Church, German Catholics founded numerous associations, started a strong journalist and publishing work, and eventually founded their own political party – Zentrum.⁴

The KP then spread across other European countries (France, Italy, Belgium, etc.). Very soon, the KP took a firm hold among the Catholic believers of the multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Although all the Catholic movements had in common the defence of the jeopardised positions and the rights gained by the Catholic Church, as well as spreading of Christian philosophy to all areas of public life, they did not have a common organisational form. Each of them was developing those organisational forms which were most appropriate for the communities in which they were active. The lack of common organisational forms was also the result of the fact that the Catholic movements were being built «from the bottom up», i.e. from the congregation, without being directly stimulated by the church hierarchy, that is, «from above».⁵

The breaking point in Croatia's history, which was also one of the causes for the appearance of the Croatian Catholic Movement (Hrvatski katolički pokret - HKP), was the arrival of the Emperor and King Franz Jozef I to Zagreb (1895). On that occasion, students symbolically burned down the Hungarian flag on Jelačić Square. Punished by being banned from Zagreb University, they continued their studies mainly in Prague, where they accepted, especially from Prof. Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the political programme based on the statement about « Slavic harmony and mutuality», with the ultimate aim to destroy the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.⁶ Having finished their studies, Masaryk's students introduced many elements of his anti-Catholicism into Croatia's public life.⁷

I. The beginning of the Croatian Catholic Movement and the basic indications of its activities (1903-1912)

The last year in the 19th century was supposed to be a turning point in the Catholic public life in general, and especially in Croatia. Pope Leo XIII proclaimed 1900 a jubilee year, wishing all Catholic nations to celebrate it through manifestations of devotion to the faith. Following the examples of similar gatherings in other Catholic countries, a Catholic gathering (congress) was organised in Croatia as well. The meeting was held in Zagreb,

⁴ Josip Buturac, "Hrvatski katolički pokret," *Marulić* 18 (1985), No. 5: 553.

⁵ Bonifacije Perović, *Hrvatski katolički pokret. Moje uspomene* (Rome: ZIRAL, 1976), p. 17.

⁶ Mirko Juraj Mataušić, "Odnos Katoličke crkve prema novim idejnim strujanjima u hrvatskim zemljama 1848-1900.," *Bogoslovska smotra* 55 (1985), No. 1-2: 211.

⁷ Jure Krišto, "Hrvatsko katoličanstvo i ideološko formiranje Stjepana Radića (1893.-1914.)," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 23 (1991), No. 1-3: 139.

from 3 – 5 September 1900. A large number of Croatia's bishops and archbishops were present, including the Bishop of Krk, Dr. Antun Mahnić. The First Croatian Catholic Meeting adopted eight resolutions. Especially significant was the one on laity and its role in Croatia's public life.⁸

The importance of the First Croatian Catholic Meeting was in the fact that it was the first serious «sign of the expressed Catholic awakening among Croats», based on the European countries of that time.⁹ Although some authors consider it to be the beginning of the HKP, in reality, it was not.¹⁰

The real initiator of the HKP was Bishop Mahnić, a quiet participant at the First Croatian Catholic Meeting, who realized the necessity of creating an organisation of the Catholic university youth, which was expressed at the congress.¹¹ Closely observing the situation in Croatia, the Bishop came to the conclusion that Christianity and the Christian world view were getting more and more jeopardised by the spreading of liberal ideas. In order to start defending the Christian principles in Croatia's public life, Mahnić started the magazine *Hrvatska Straža* (1903). The first issue of the magazine marked the beginning of the actual work in organising the HKP.¹²

With Mahnić's referring to Christian principles, Croatian society began to experience «the separation of spirits», i.e., the separation of Christian ideas from those which could be proven, or at least were considered to be, irrec-
oncilable with them.¹³

To achieve his aim, Bishop Mahnić, not followed by the participants of the Croatian Catholic Meeting, independently began organising the Catholic university youth. As early as autumn 1902, he sent Ivan Butković, a priest from his bishopric, to Vienna for studies. His task was to gather Croatian Catholic students. Soon, in Vienna, Rev. Butković, together with Ljubomir Maraković, one of the most prominent Croatian literature critics in the first half of the 20th century, and a few like-minded persons, founded the Croatian Catholic Academic Society «Hrvatska» (1903).¹⁴ In October 1905, in Vienna, «Hrvatska» started publishing the students' journal *Luč*. Two years later, the paper's administration moved to Zagreb.¹⁵ The purpose of *Luč* was to introduce Mahnić's ideas into Croatian Catholic student circles, with the ultimate goal to win the sympathies of the Croatian public opinion for the HKP.¹⁶

⁸ Anton Bozanić, *Biskup Mahnić pastir i javni djelatnik u Hrvata* (Zagreb - Krk: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1991), p. 100.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁰ Jure Krišto, *Prešućena povijest. Katolička crkva u hrvatskoj politici 1850.-1918.* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994), p. 181.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹² A. Bozanić, *Biskup Mahnić*, pp. 101-102.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

¹⁴ Stanislav Vitković, «Crkva i kultura u Hrvata na prijelazu iz 19. u 20. stoljeće», *Bogoslovska smotra* 55 (1985), No. 3-4: 449.

¹⁵ J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, p. 224.

¹⁶ B. Perović, *Moje uspomene*, p. 41.

Three years after the founding of «Hrvatska» in Vienna, the Croatian Catholic Academic Society «Domagoj» was founded in Zagreb, and immediately started gathering Catholic students from all secondary schools in Croatia.

In the following few years, other Catholic academic societies were founded: «Preporod» (Graz), «Kačić» (Innsbruck) and others.¹⁷

Apart from Croatian Catholic academic societies, there were also seminary societies, which were organised in all bishoprics and monastic seminaries: «Duns Skot» (Zagreb), «Bakula» (Mostar), «Akvinac» (Dubrovnik), «Milovan» (Makarska), «Ferkić» (Cres) and others.¹⁸

Without any assistance from other members of the Croatian Catholic episcopate, Bishop Mahnić was directing the organisation of Croatian Catholic youth, but without interfering with the societies' internal structure.¹⁹

II. Croatian Catholic Movement before the Beginning of World War I (1912-1914)

In 1912, Bishop Mahnić incited the founding of the Croatian Catholic *Seniorat*.²⁰ The Seniorat's inaugural conference was held on 30 March 1913 in Ljubljana.²¹ The Seniorat membership was elected, in principle, among senior students, former members of Croatian Catholic academic societies and seminary congregations. Bishop Mahnić considered himself a regular member of the Seniorat.²²

The Second Croatian Catholic Meeting (Congress), held in Ljubljana (24–27 August 1913), holds a special place in the history of the HKP. It was in fact a «Croatian-Slovene Catholic Meeting». The preparation and the course of the Croatian part of the meeting were fully in the hands of the Seniorat.²³ One should note that Senior Petar Grgec clearly testified to the presence of Yugoslav ideology in the leading HKP circles.²⁴

In 1910 in Zagreb, after the discontinuation of the controversial daily newspaper *Hrvatstvo*,²⁵ from whose political intentions even Bishop Mahnić²⁶ dis-

¹⁷ Ivan Vitezić, "Die Römisch-katholische Kirche bei den Kroaten," in: Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (eds.), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918.*, 4. vol. (Vienna : Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985), pp. 371-372.

¹⁸ B. Perović, *Moje uspomene*, p. 48.

¹⁹ A. Bozanić, *Biskup Mahnić*, p. 109.

²⁰ Franjo Šanjek, *Kršćanstvo na hrvatskom prostoru. Pregled religiozne povijesti Hrvata (7-20. st.)* (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1991), p. 348.

²¹ Petar Grgec, *Dr. Rudolf Eckert* (Rijeka: HKD Sv. Ćirila i Metoda /Sv. Jeronima/ - "Zvona", 1995), p. 214.

²² A. Bozanić, *Biskup Mahnić*, p. 110.

²³ See Janko Šimrak (ed.), *Spomen knjiga o II. hrvatskom katoličkom kongresu u Ljubljani 1913. (Hrvatsko-slovenski katolički sastanak u Ljubljani 1913.)*, (Rijeka: Kuća dobre štampe, 1913).

²⁴ J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, p. 320.

²⁵ See: *Ibid.*, pp. 211-217.

tanced himself, the Capuchins from Rijeka led by father Bernardin Škrivanić expressed an interest in starting a new Catholic daily paper. As early as the end of 1910, the idea was discussed among the «Domagoj» members.²⁷ The decision to start a non-party daily paper was made at the meeting of «Croatian-Slovene Catholic students», held in Ljubljana in early August 1912. Bishop Mahnić also attended the meeting.²⁸ The first issue of *Riječke Novine*, a non-party Catholic daily, was printed on 7 December 1912, and edited by Seniors Rudolf Eckert and Petar Rogulja. The day before Christmas 1912, that very daily paper published «the Croatian Catholic Movement's first political programme article».²⁹ One should emphasise that the article took the position of the «national unity of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs».³⁰ Although that «political programme article» did not have any party colour, some sympathisers of *Riječke Novine* considered that the HKP had entered «active politics» as an «independent and separate group».³¹

The figures of the HKP organisations in late 1913 were the following: four academic societies and two university clubs with 150 members, ten semi-nary congregations with 300 members, forty-one secondary school congregations with about 3000 members and sixty youth peasant societies with 3000 members all led by 150 Seniors.³²

The HKP had one daily newspaper, five weekly papers, three half-monthly journals, fourteen monthly journals and one bimonthly journal. It also influenced the writing in five more daily papers, five weekly and seven monthly journals, and one additional journal that was published irregularly.³³

III. Activities of the Croatian Catholic Movement during World War I (1914-1918)

Gavrilo Princip's ominous shots in Sarajevo, on St. Vitus Day in 1914, marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Europe. His crime committed against the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife Sofia, was the motive for the beginning of the largest conflict experienced by man at the time – World War I (1914-1918). The years of war paralysed the work of the HKP to a large extent, but the movement's leading men thought that the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from

²⁶ Ibid., p. 247.

²⁷ P. Grgec, *Dr. R. Eckert*, p. 185.

²⁸ J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, pp. 307-308.

²⁹ Petra Rogulja [R. Petrić], «Naša bilanca», *Novine*, 16 November 1918, p. 1.

³⁰ In more detail on the genesis of adherence of a part of the organised Croatian Catholics to the Yugoslav ideology, see: J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, pp. 288-289, 310-312.

³¹ Ibid., p. 311.

³² A. Bozanić, *Biskup Mahnić*, p. 110.

³³ Ibid.

the political map of Europe and the creation of a common South Slavic state gave them hope for inexhaustible possibilities of action.

a) Discontinuation of Riječke Novine and starting of Novine in Zagreb (1914)

In mid July 1914, the leading people of the HKP, or the Seniorat, of that time, gathered in Rijeka: Bishop Mahnić, Rev. Fran Binički, R. Eckert, P. Rogulja, Rev. Milan Pavelić, Fr. Miroslav Škrivanić, P. Grgec and others. After having analysed the new political situation following the killing of the Austro-Hungarian heir to the throne, the present Catholic priests and laymen came to the conclusion that «hard days» were coming, and that the «Croatian people are not ready for them».³⁴

As soon as the war broke out, military censorship started harassing, and thus obstructing, *Riječke Novine*, the only non-party political Catholic daily paper in Croatia. Ultimately, based upon the decision of the General Attorney's Office in Rijeka, the paper was prohibited on the last day of August 1914. The authorities justified their decision claiming that the paper was «jeopardising the interests of military operations and the state interests in Rijeka»,³⁵ but the real reason for the prohibition was «the anti-Austrian and Slavic orientation» in the articles of *Riječke Novine*.³⁶ Together with the disappearance of the Rijeka daily, a circle of Catholic laymen-intellectuals, led by P. Rogulja, also left the city of Rijeka.

The prohibition of *Riječke Novine* did not mean the disappearance of all Catholic daily papers in Croatia. Not wasting time, Bishop Mahnić, together with R. Eckert, P. Rogulja and the Rijeka Capuchin at that time, father Jeronim (Dragutin) Tomac, approached the Archbishop of Zagreb, Dr. Antun Bauer, requesting his assistance in order to continue publishing the Catholic daily. The Archbishop agreed to do that under the condition that the paper be given some other name.³⁷ The new daily, called simply *Novine*, appeared on 8 September 1914 in Zagreb.³⁸ In the beginning, the editorship's intention was to passively resist the war and that the content of *Novine* would be limited to mere reporting, as well as re-printing and translating foreign articles. Although in the beginning the Yugoslav ideology was almost imperceptible, it soon moved onto the pages of *Novine*. That was especially noticeable after Rogulja took over the editorship.

The war required the Catholic clergy and laymen to adjust their non-pastoral and non-religious activities with the new conditions. Apart from the generally visible press activities, they started with a secret, almost invisible

³⁴ P. Grgec, *Dr. R. Eckert*, p. 256.

³⁵ P. Grgec, «Noviji katolički pokret medju Hrvatima», *Luč* 17 (1921), No. 2: 44-45.

³⁶ Marijo Matulić, «Postanak Jugoslavije,» *Seljački Kalendar* 1928, p. 41.

³⁷ J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, p. 333.

³⁸ *Ibid.*



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activity, accessible only to a limited circle of like-minded people. Based on the saved testimonies, it seems that Fr. Jozo Milošević was the first from the Catholic clergy in Croatia who decided to take steps, on his own, in order to «ensure for our people a better destiny».³⁹ At the beginning of the war, he was carrying out the duty of the Provincial of Franciscans-Conventuals on the island of Cres. In late 1914, he went to Rome, to explain to Pope Benedict XV and some other diplomats the problems of the Croatian nation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Pope secretly received the Croatian friar on several occasions, asking him for detailed information on the situation in the southern part of the Monarchy.⁴⁰ By all accounts, Milošević's action did not have in any visible result.

b) “The Rijeka Memorandum” (“Riječka spomenica”)

As early as the first months of the war, Rev. Binički came to the idea, similarly as Fr. Milošević, that steps should be taken at the Holy See in order to ensure Croatia's future, regardless of the outcome of the war. He thought that an action should be taken by the leading people in the HKP.⁴¹ Having accepted R. Eckert's suggestion and Bishop Mahnić's invitation, Rev. Binički left for Rijeka, where he most probably arrived in late February 1915. At the Capuchin monastery, Bishop Mahnić, Fr. Milošević, Fr. B. Škrivanić and Rev. Binički agreed that a memorandum (*spomenica*) should be written «on behalf of all Catholic Croats», and signed by «Croatian bishops and excellent laymen».⁴² The memorandum was drafted in a hurry, because Italy was

³⁹ Juraj Kocijanić, *Pape i hrvatski narod* (Zagreb: Nadbiskupska tiskara, 1927), p. 432.

⁴⁰ Fran Binički, *Moje tamnovanje. Uspomene iz nedavnih dana* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko književno društvo sv. Jeronima, 1942), p. 13.

⁴¹ P. Grgec, *Dr. R. Eckert*, pp. 270-271.

⁴² *Ibid.*

expected to enter the war on the Entente side. In the beginning of March 1915, a new meeting was summoned by the Capuchins in Rijeka, where apart from Bishop Mahnić, Rev. Binički and Fr. Milošević, the following individuals were present: Rev. Frane Bulić, a prominent archeologist, Dr. Matko Laginja, politician from Istra, Dr. Ante Dulibić, a Dalmatian politician in the Croatian Party of Right, Rev. M. Pavelić, a Catholic poet, as well as Slovene politicians of Catholic provenance, Rev. Ivan Evangelist Krek, Rev. Dr. Anton Korošec and others.⁴³ Although Slovene representatives attended the meeting in Rijeka, it was proposed that «the Memorandum» should be sent to the leaders of the Slovenian People's Party (*Slovenska ljudska stranka* – SLS), a political organisation that arose from the Slovene Catholic Movement.⁴⁴ When «the Memorandum» was accepted both in Rijeka and Ljubljana, they could send it to the Pope.⁴⁵ The final version of «the Memorandum», known in historiography as «the Rijeka Memorandum», was signed only by Bishop Mahnić, and taken to Rome, well hidden, by Fr. Milošević and Fr. Miroslav Škrivanić.

«The Rijeka Memorandum» requested the following:

*«the co-signers kindly request that after the war, the Pope [Benedict XV] plead for the interests of Croats and Slovenes at the peace conference. If Austria continues to exist after the war, the Croats and Slovenes want their own state within it, with a seat in Zagreb. If Austria dissolves, the Croats and Slovenes shall freely decide on their destiny».*⁴⁶

Undoubtedly, the Croatian Catholic priests, mainly from Primorje and Dalmatia, some Croatian Catholic laymen, and the representatives of Slovene Catholic clergy, together with SLS leadership, requested from Pope Benedict XV to ensure the territorial unification of Croatian and Slovene lands regardless of the outcome of the war. Significantly, Fr. Milošević subsequently added the possibility that «Croats may also have an agreement with others outside the [Austro-Hungarian] Monarchy».⁴⁷ Milošević's addendum to «the Memorandum» implies that, already, some Catholic priests «were building up the option of the creation of a South Slavic state of a larger-scale».⁴⁸ This presumption is supported by the words of the Counsel of the Russian Embassy in Rome at that time, Nikolaj Vasilievich Poggenpohl. In his report

⁴³ Janko Pleterski, *Prvo opredeljenje Slovenaca za Jugoslaviju* (Beograd: Nolit, 1976), pp. 75-76.

⁴⁴ Bogdan Krizman, «Predavanje Antona Korošca o postanku Jugoslavije», *Historijski prehled* 5 (1959), No. 1: 66.

⁴⁵ J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, p. 336.

⁴⁶ Quoted in: Ljubo Boban, «Prilozi za političku biografiju don Frane Bulića (1914-1934)», in: *Kontroverze iz povijesti Jugoslavije. Dokumentima i polemikom o temama iz novije povijesti Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga – Stvarnost, 1987), p. 98. See also: Tomislav Mrkonjić, «Hrvatski katolički pokret i 'Riječka spomenica' iz travnja 1915. (Latinski koncept)», in: Zlatko Matijević (ed.), *Hrvatski katolički pokret* (Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2002), pp. 437-456.

⁴⁷ J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, p. 337.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

of 24/11 April 1915, based on the information obtained from the Russian journalist Vsevolod P. Svyatkovski, he wrote to the Foreign Minister, Sergey Dmitrievich Sazonov, on a meeting at the Capuchin monastery in Rijeka. He claimed, among other things, that Fr. Milošević and Fr. M. Škrivanić had said in Rome «today, all parties in the South Slavic countries aspire to the full destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,» and that «the Slavic feelings of the Catholic clergy are so strong, that they readily accept the issue of recognition of the Orthodox dynasty.» Furthermore, the meeting held in Rijeka «recognised as desirable that Croats and Slovenes become a part of the united South Slavic state under the state⁴⁹ of the Karađorđević dynasty». ⁵⁰

Although it is difficult to speak about the immediate success of «the Rijeka Memorandum», one may state with certainty that it was an ideological predecessor of «the May Declaration» (1917).

c) “The May Declaration” (“Svibanjska deklaracija”) and the Declaration Movement” (“Deklaracijski pokret”) (1917-1918)

After the initiation of the Zagreb *Novine* and the conspirative operation around «the Rijeka Memorandum», the activities of the Seniorat members became even more intensive. Namely, *Novine*, for some time edited by R. Eckert, and then for almost two years, P. Rogulja, and finally by Rev. Janko Šimrak, professor and later Greek Catholic (Uniate) bishop in Križevci, became the most popular daily newspaper in Zagreb.⁵¹ At the moment when, as he said, «the honour came my way» to take over from Rogulja the duty of the editor-in-chief of *Novine*, Rev. Šimrak not only continued to edit the paper in the «spirit of Yugoslavism», but also became involved in leading Croatian politics in secret.⁵² On 28 November 1916, a meeting was held at St. Blaise parish house in Zagreb, by the parish priest and politician, Dr. Svetozar Rittig. The meeting was attended by Seniors Rev. Šimrak, Velimir Deželić Jr. and P. Rogulja, and several members of Starčević’s Party of Right (*Milinovci*): Ivica Peršić, Dr. Ante Pavelić (dentist), Cezar Akačić and Dragutin Hrvoj. The representatives of Slovene Catholic politicians were Rev. Korošec and Karl Vertovšek.⁵³ The purpose of the meeting was to agree on the orientation of Croatian and Slovene politics, i.e., «South Slavic politics» in the coming days. In the opinion of the priests and laymen attending the meeting, the solution of the Croatian issue of nation-state

⁴⁹ The word should be «rule».

⁵⁰ Quoted in: Ante Mandić, *Fragmenti za historiju ujedinjenja. Povodom četrdesetogodišnjice osnivanja Jugoslavenskog odbora* (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1956), p. 161.

⁵¹ Josip Andrić, “Pet godina H[rvatske] P[učke] S[tranke],” *Seljačke Novine*, 25 April 1924, p. 1.

⁵² J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, p. 344.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 345.

depended mostly on the winner of the World War. Judging correctly that the Allies would win the war, they decided to support the idea of the «liberation of small nations», which, in their opinion, was to eventually result in the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of an independent South Slavic state.⁵⁴ Satisfied with the positions taken, Rev. Šimrak wrote in his diary «It's about time to take a precise direction in the great world's events».⁵⁵

The Seniorat members later took that meeting as the «origin of the subsequent National Council» and «the Declaration Movement», which began with the proclamation of the «the May Declaration».⁵⁶

After the death of the old sovereign Franz Jozef I (1916), the South Slavic politicians in the Monarchy started to orient themselves increasingly towards the request for greater, and if possible, full independence of their administratively and politically disunited lands. The request was based upon the «national principle» and «Croatian state right». These two principles were explicitly stated in «the May Declaration»⁵⁷ of the Yugoslav (South Slavic) Club at the Imperial Council in the Austrian Parliament in Vienna.⁵⁸

In the former Yugoslav historiography, «the May Declaration» was often given different, mostly opposing judgements. Nevertheless, all of them can be reduced to two predominant opinions. One of them saw «the Declaration» as the work of the court in Vienna and claimed that it represented the reflection of the «trialist concept»⁵⁹ of the solution to the «South Slavic issue» within the borders of the Monarchy, and thus was the expression of political opportunism. The other was supporting the standpoint that it was a matter of political tactics in the war conditions of that time, but that it served as a weapon, which made possible the promotion of the idea and the very action of the creation of a common state of South Slavic nations (without Bulgarians) outside the Monarchy.⁶⁰

The meaning of «the May Declaration» was not only contained in its text and the wording used, but also in the movement, which developed soon afterwards.. Various political parties and groups took part in «the Declaration Movement».

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ J. Šimrak, «Neke uspomene iz godine 1916.-1918.», *Narodna Politika*, 22 December 1923, p. 3.

⁵⁶ M. Matulić, «Postanak Jugoslavije,» p. 43.

⁵⁷ The integral text of «the Declaration» see: Ferdo Čulinović, *Dokumenti o Jugoslaviji. Historijat od osnutka zajedničke države do danas* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968), p. 44.

⁵⁸ Ivo Banac, *Nacionalno pitanje u Jugoslaviji. Porijeklo, povijest, politika* (Zagreb: Globus, 1988), p. 125.

⁵⁹ About «trialism» see Jaroslav Šidak at al., *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860-1914.* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1968), pp. 227-228; Mirjana Gross, «Hrvatska politika velikoaustrijskog kruga oko prijestolonasljednika Franje Ferdinanda,» *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2 (1970), No. 2: 9-74; A. J. P. Taylor, *Habsburška Monarhija 1809-1918.* (Zagreb: Znanje, 1990), pp. 280-281.

⁶⁰ Dragovan Šepić, *Italija, Saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje 1914-1918.* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1970), p. 204.

Although the Seniorat, at the proposal of Archbishop Bauer, adhered to «the May Declaration», at the meeting held on 1 – 2 July 1917 in Zagreb,⁶¹ *Novine* supported it unreservedly.⁶² With «the May Declaration», a new life started within the HKP and its leadership, the Seniorat.⁶³

In their campaign for «the May Declaration» the Yugoslav Club members paid special attention to Bosnia and Herzegovina. They were of the opinion that was the very place where the maturity of the «Declaration policy» would be tested.⁶⁴

Rev. Korošec, President of the Yugoslav Club, arrived on 31 August 1917 to Sarajevo.⁶⁵ His task was to determine the opinion of the leading political circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and above all, the opinion of the Archbishop of Vrhbosna, Dr. Josip Stadler, a supporter of the Party of (Croat State) Right's concept of the solution to the Croatian issue within the borders of the reorganised Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as well as the attitude of his political group about «the May Declaration». Dr. Ivo Pilar, one of the founders of modern political geography, explained the standpoint of the people sharing Stadler's views, emphasising that the group stood for the state and national unification of all Croatian lands, of course, without Slovenes. Therefore, the unification of Croatian lands, including the Triune Kingdom of Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia, also included Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Istria. The unification would not be carried out within the «Land of the Crown of St. Stephen» (Hungary), but in a kind of «condominium» of the Austrian empire and Hungarian kingdom. Archbishop Stadler was underlining that he and the people sharing his opinion could not deviate from their positions and programme principles defined in the «Memorandum», which Josip Vancaš and Dr. Pilar had submitted to King Karl I [IV] in mid-August that year.⁶⁶ The unfavourable outcome of Korošec's talks with Stadler's group was compensated with the success with Bosnian and Herzegovinian Franciscans, who whole-heartedly supported «the May Declaration».⁶⁷

Prior to the public declaration of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Franciscans for «the May Declaration», Stadler's «Statement» was published and directed against the Yugoslav Club's political programme.⁶⁸ The four

⁶¹ Krešimir Pečnjak, «Spor s gosp.[odinom] Galovićem», *Seniorski Vjesnik*, October 1917, p. 8.

⁶² «Izjava 'Južnoslavenskog kluba'», *Novine*, 1. June 1917, p. 3.

⁶³ M. Matulić, «Ratni Domagoj. (1916.-1918.)», *Luč. Almanah Luči 1905-1925*. 20 (1925), No. 9-10: 401.

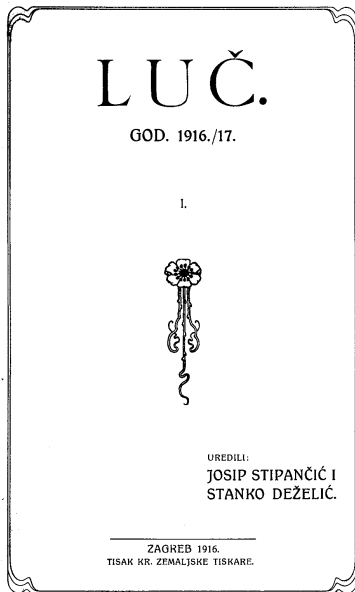
⁶⁴ J. Pleterski, *Prvo opredeljenje*, p. 190.

⁶⁵ B.[onifac] Badrov, «Odjek svibanjske deklaracije u Bosni», *Franjevački Vijesnik* 35 (1928), No. 12: 360.

⁶⁶ Luka Đaković, *Položaj Bosne i Hercegovine u austro-ugarskim koncepcijama rješenja jugoslavenskog pitanja 1914-1918*. (Tuzla: Univerzal, 1981), p. 177.

⁶⁷ See: Ferdo Šišić, *Dokumenti o postanku Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca 1914-1919*. (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1920), pp. 107-108.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.



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points of Stadler's «Statement» presented the view of the circle of people who shared the Archbishop's views on the future of Croats in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The first point requested the solving of the constitutional issue in the south of Monarchy «on the basis of Croatian state right», with the preservation of «Croatian national and state individuality».⁶⁹ The second point requested the unification of all Croatian lands to which the Croatian state right applied. The third point spoke about Slovenes and the assistance that could be given to their struggle for «self-preservation» and endeavours «to unite themselves with us [Croats]».⁷⁰ The last point stated that the Croatian state and its interests might be best protected within «a strong Habsburg Monarchy», but only under the condition that the Monarchy change its inappropriate policy towards Croats.⁷¹

A few days after Stadler's «Statement» was published, *Novine* reacted negatively to it. The Senior daily paper claimed, of course, that the «Statement» had an «opportunistic standpoint» and fully rejected it.⁷²

Roughly at the same time when Rev. Korošec was in Sarajevo, Rev. Krek came to Zagreb. A meeting held at the Franciscan monastery was attended, apart from Rev. Krek, by some twenty priests and Catholic laymen.⁷³ The Slovene guest argued before his audience that the Austro-Hungarian

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² «Nova izjava o rješenju našega narodnoga problema», *Novine*, 22 November 1917, p. 1.

⁷³ Josip Andrić, «Sjećanje na dra Kreka. (K desetoj godišnjici smrti najvećeg slovenskog pučanina.)», *Seljački Kalendar 1927*, p. 45.

Monarchy and Germany would be defeated in the war. He especially emphasised that Italy would be the worst enemy not only to Slovenes, but also to Croats and Serbs.⁷⁴ According to Krek, a co-author and co-signer of «the May Declaration», he «counted on the Habsburg Monarchy only if the general configuration in the world would not possibly allow the founding of a fully free Yugoslav state together with Serbia and Montenegro».⁷⁵ On that occasion, he openly spoke in favour of a Yugoslav state outside the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy – «Yugoslavia will consist of all lands where Slovenes, Croats and Serbs live, except for those, which God forbid, Italians may take from us».⁷⁶

In February 1918, the political programme of «the May Declaration» was accepted by the Catholic clergy of Zagreb, Varaždin, Senj, Zadar and others.⁷⁷

The «Declaration movement» was such that it was necessary to hold a meeting of politicians from all South Slavic lands within the Monarchy. The meeting was held 2 – 3 March 1918 in Zagreb, and concluded with a short declaration stating that «Croatian-Serbian-Slovene politicians [...] have agreed on the necessity to concentrate all those parties and groups which, holding the position of national unity, and relying on the principle of national self-determination, seek their national independence, and a state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, built upon democratic foundations».⁷⁸

It should be underlined that «the Zagreb Resolution» left out the wording on «Croatian state right», which had not been the case with «the May Declaration». Nevertheless, the Seniorat members could be satisfied with such a development, because they had left out, much earlier than the others, the clause on the remaining of Croatian, or other South Slavic lands within the Monarchy.⁷⁹

Soon after «the Zagreb Resolution», on 30 April 1918, in Zagreb, there was a joint meeting of Croatian and Slovene Seniors. The Catholic elite attending the meeting fully approved of the decision made at the special meeting of the Seniorat of Zagreb, held earlier, and attended by Bishop Mahnić, that Seniors would not be allowed to publicly speak against «the May Declaration».⁸⁰

d) Bishop Mahnić and «the May Declaration» (1918)

In Croatian lands, «the Declaration movement» reached its peak almost precisely on the first anniversary of the publishing of «the May Declaration». In May 1918, Bishop Mahnić started publishing a series of articles in *Novine*,

⁷⁴ J. Šimrak, «Neke uspomene iz godine 1916.-1918.», *Narodna Politika*, 22 December 1923, p. 4.

⁷⁵ P. Grgec, «Dr. Janez Ev. Krek. (27. XI. 1865.-8. X. 1917.)», in: Janez Evangelist Krek, *Socijalni eseji, govori i nacrti I*, (Požega: Narodna prosvjeta [1920]), pp. XII-XIII.

⁷⁶ J. Andrić, «Sjećanje na dra Kreka.», p. 46.

⁷⁷ «Izjava», *Novine*, 2 February 1918, p. 1.; «Izjava svećenstva gradova Varaždina i Senja», *Novine*, 7 February 1918, p. 1.

with the aim to defend «the Declaration» and promote the ideas presented in it. The first article of the series, in which he refuted the objection that «the Declaration» was an assassination of Catholicism in favour of «Serbian Orthodoxy», was wholly censored.⁸¹ The objection was formulated by the opponents of «the May Declaration» in three points, i.e., that those standing on «the programme of Croatian-Slovene-Serbian unification into one state group, [are held] guilty of a triple assassination: of Catholicism, by betraying the **Catholic cause to Serbian Orthodoxy**; of Croatianhood, by entering a state community Serbhood; of Austria, by following the political aims, which jeopardise the survival of the Monarchy!», and was fully rejected by Bishop Mahnić.⁸² In his writing about «the second assassination», or about Serbs in Croatian lands, the Bishop of Krk said: «Serbs live with us and among us. Serbhood is a fact. [...] What is better [...] for the Croatian and Catholic cause: either to declare the war of extermination against Serbs, or to seek with them an amicable *modus vivendi*? [...] Serbs are not Catholics, but they are Christians; [...] Serbs are our [...] brothers in blood and language».⁸³ Referring to «the third assassination», the one against the Monarchy, the Bishop wrote: «They say that, with our national-political aspiration, we jeopardise the survival of the Monarchy, by aspiring after the aims, which cannot be put in harmony with its vital interests! [...] Nothing in the interest of the Monarchy is more desirable than the founding of a South Slavic state, as envisaged in the May programme.»⁸⁴ By writing those articles, Mahnić rejected all accusations against «the Declaration», and in subsequent articles, he tried to explain in more detail the aims of «the Declaration». Especially interesting was the Bishop's expectation of positive developments regarding the ecclesiastic unity between the Catholic Church and Orthodoxy in the Balkans, as well as in the Orthodox East. In that very context he saw a special role, or even «mission», of the Croatian nation: «We are standing on the threshold of a new era. The focus of the secular politics is being transferred from the West to the East; and here, as we can see from all signs, Croathood has a role similar to the one designated with the words 'antemurale christianitatis'. New perspectives are being opened to us [...]. The Eastern field is ripening. And who will be the first, sent by the Lord to the Catholic harvest in the Eastern fields, if not again the Croatian people, who are on the frontier to the East, and who have the common blood and language with the Eastern nations? Here, Croatian people, with the intention of the Providence, and the advice of the Triune God, it has been concluded

⁷⁸ Josip Horvat, *Politička povijest Hrvatske 2* (Zagreb: August Cesarec, 1989), p. 32.

⁷⁹ J. Krišto, *Prešućena povijest*, p. 359.

⁸⁰ «Sastanak hrvatskih i slovenskih senijora u Zagrebu», *Senijorski Vjesnik*, May 1918, p. 42.

⁸¹ Ivan Vitezić, «Mahnić i njegovo djelo», *Hrvatska revija. Jubilarni zbornik 1951-1975* (München - Barcelona, Knjižnica Hrvatske revije, 1976), p. 581.

⁸² Antun Mahnić, «Jugoslavenstvo i katolicizam», *Novine*, 22 May 1918, p. 1.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

that you shall, among your own brothers, who were due to fatal events separated for thousand years, take on the mission of unification».⁸⁵ This was, in Mahnić's words, «the transcendental reason» for the acceptance of «the May Declaration» programme.

Although the political and ideological opponents of Bishop Mahnić and the HKP used his own words as obvious proof of the existence of the «proselytising aspirations» in the Catholic Church, here in fact was the matter of the practical application of the «Cyrilo-Methodian idea», or the endeavour for the unity of Christian churches in the East and the West. There were several reasons for Mahnić's writing in favour of «the May Declaration»: 1) fear of the Slovenes being endangered by German imperialism, 2) fear from the Italian threat for Slovenes as well as Croats, who were also threatened by Hungarian hegemonic aspirations; 3) «optimistic unionism» being poorly founded upon a «Cyrilo-Methodian» basis; 4) dangerous self-delusion in respect to the real essence of Greater-Serbianism; and 5) accepting of the ideas of various pro-Yugoslav oriented individuals at their face value.⁸⁶ In the last of the series of articles, Bishop Mahnić decisively approved of Seniorat's adherence to «the May Declaration».⁸⁷

Having mixed politics and religion in his defence of «the May Declaration», Mahnić brought himself to the position of vulnerability to accusations for the misuse of the Catholic faith for political purposes, that is, for **clericalism**.

In the Croatian political arena, Mahnić's articles faced approval of those sharing his views, but also a double denial. The challenges were coming from the circles of Croatian liberal intellectuals gathered around a magazine from Zagreb - *Hrvatska Njiva*, but also from a Catholic priest, Stipe Vučetić, a member of the Party of (Croat State) Right. The main accusation of *Hrvatska Njiva* against «the May Declaration» was that «Mahnić's 'mission of unification', is in fact the Roman Drang nach Osten [...]! That is the politics [...] which only pretends to be Yugoslav, in order to achieve better results, but in fact, it is the weapon of the Vatican propaganda which aims at the Catholicising of the Balkans!».⁸⁸ The attacks from Croatian liberal circles against Mahnić's support of «the May Declaration» did not surprise anyone.

The Rev. Vučetić's writing was unexpectedly sharp. He published, in the «Frankist oriented» daily *Hrvatska*, a series of articles entitled «The Character of Yugoslav Propaganda». Having analysed Mahnić's arguments in favour of «the Declaration», Rev. Vučetić immediately stated that the Bishop had disregarded «Croatian state right, as if it were a worthless matter».⁸⁹ Mahnić's

⁸⁵ A. Mahnić, «Zvanje hrvatskoga naroda», *Novine*, 26 May 1918, p. 1.

⁸⁶ I. Vitezić, «Die Römisch-katholische Kirche», p. 373.

⁸⁷ A. Mahnić, «Politika hrvatskih katolika», *Novine*, 27 May 1918, p. 1.

⁸⁸ J. D.[Juraj Demetrović], «Klerikalizam i narodno jedinstvo», *Hrvatska Njiva* 2 (1918), No. 32: 552.

⁸⁹ Stipe Vučetić, «Značaj jugoslavenske propagande.», *Hrvatska*, 27 June 1918, p. 1.

careless statement that Croats, as a Catholic nation, had a «mission» given by God as regards the Eastern Orthodox Slavs, that is, to bring them to the ecclesiastic unity, was correctly judged as theologically unacceptable - because «there are **no special** tasks given by **God** to **individual nations**».⁹⁰ In conclusion of his relentless criticism for Mahnić's apologia of «the May Declaration», Rev. Vučetić wrote the following: «[...] the Yugoslav May Declaration has redirected the course of Croatian politics towards anti-Croatian and Yugoslav aims. What follows, undoubtedly, is that the Catholic faith is destined to get Judas' payment for the service to Yugoslav propaganda. [...] Dr. A. Mahnić's paper is Yugoslav ideology lacking any real or actual basis, with the capacity to lead Croatian nation to a disaster. [...]».⁹¹ As far as Rev. Vučetić was concerned, any Yugoslav policy would definitely be inimically directed against Croatia. Vučetić saw the future of the Croatian people and state within the Habsburg Monarchy. He substantiated his opinion with a quotation from Starčević's article «Na čemu smo» (Where we are) from 1878, in which he wrote: "[...] the knots of Europe are unknotted and untied in whatever way, for Croats it would be the best, in the legal self-reliance, **to remain under the ruling dynasty; the survival of the dynasty depends on Croats; the survival of Croats as a happy nation mainly depends on the ruling dynasty;** [...]"⁹² Ante Starčević, the founder of the Party of Right (1861), did not take by chance such a standpoint regarding the relationship between the Habsburg dynasty and Croats. Namely, in 1860, Mikhail Petrovich Pogodin, a Russian historian and ideologist of pan-Slavism, and one of the founders of the Moscow Slavic Committee, whose aim was to unite all non-Russian Slavs under the Russian Emperor's protectorate, published a series of letters in German. Those letters were written in the period between 1838 and 1842, and were, in fact, secret reports addressed to the then Russian Minister, Count Sergey Semyonovich Uvarov, and spoke about the political, national, religious and other relations within the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy. Among other topics, they revealed the expansionist plans of the Greater-Russian policy directed towards the South Slavic nations in the Balkans. Interestingly, those letters, in handwriting, also known as «the Secret Book», came into the hands of Starčević's friend and fellow fighter for Croatian national rights, Eugen Kvaternik, during his «first exile», or emigration in Russia and Western Europe (1858-1860).⁹³

e) The Croatian Catholic Movement and the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (1918)

Towards the end of World War I, the military and political situation in the South Slavic countries within the Monarchy was becoming more and more

⁹⁰ S. Vučetić, «Značaj jugoslavenske propagande», *Hrvatska*, 8 July 1918, p. 1.

⁹¹ S. Vučetić, «Značaj jugoslavenske propagande», *Hrvatska*, 10 July 1918, p. 1.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Cherubin Šegvić, *Prvo progonstvo Eugena Kvaternika, godine 1858.-1860. Prilog za najnoviju hrvatsku povijest. Po njegovu dnevniku I*, (Zagreb: Hrvatska pučka knjižnica, 1907), pp. 45-92.

unfavourable for the authorities. In addition to mutinies and desertions, village populations became radical due to their difficult position. Those factors significantly contributed to the movement of «national concentration» of political forces regardless of their party and ideological affiliation.

The Seniorat started relatively early to support the general «national concentration».⁹⁴ The annual assembly of Catholic Seniors for Dalmatia, in Split, decided in July 1918 that they would «support any work for the national concentration, the purpose of which is to lead the nation towards the establishment of a state of Croats, Serbs and Slovenes».⁹⁵

After the consultations held on 5 and 6 October 1918, the political representatives of Croatian, Slovene and Serbian parties in the Monarchy, determined in their plan to create an independent South Slavic state, founded the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, that is, a new supreme political body.⁹⁶ The Croatian Parliament, which was still active, accepted unanimously, at its session on 29 October 1918, the proposal of a Serb, Svetozar Pribičević, leader of the Croatian-Serbian Coalition, and a Croat, Dr. A. Pavelić (dentist), president of Starčević's Party of Right, to discontinue all relations in terms of constitutional rights with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. At this last session, the Parliament also accepted Pavelić's proposal on the transfer of all authorities to the newly-founded National Council.

At the National Council, the Seniorat was represented by Rev. Šimrak, who was a Central Committee member, Fr. Stanko Banić and Rev. Ferdo Rožić. Apart from them, many HKP members joined the work of the National Council.⁹⁷

The most important session of the National Council Central Committee was held in the night between 23 and 24 November 1918 in Zagreb. A decision was made on the urgent unification with the Kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. The Council selected a delegation of twenty-eight members, who were instructed to carry out «without delay» the organisation of the new state, in agreement with the Serbian Government and all Serbian and Montenegrin political parties.⁹⁸ Senior Šimrak was among the selected delegation members.⁹⁹ At that nocturnal session, Rev. Šimrak asked to speak, and stated that the policy of «national unity» should lead «within two, three generations» to a «single nation».¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ J. Šimrak [Dr. B. K.], «Narodna koncentracija», *Novine*, 29 June 1918, p. 1.

⁹⁵ Marko Vunić [M. V-ć], «Glavna skupština 'Hrv.[atskoga] kat.[oličkog] Senijorata u Dalmaciji», *Senijorski Vjesnik*, October 1918, p. 75.

⁹⁶ I. Banac, *Nacionalno pitanje*, p. 127.

⁹⁷ P. Grgec, «Noviji katolički pokret medju Hrvatima», p. 47.

⁹⁸ I. Banac, *Nacionalno pitanje*, p. 135.

⁹⁹ Ivan Peršić, «Furtimaši!», *Hrvat*, 27 February 1919, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Croatian state archive, Zagreb, National Council holdings. Minutes from the National Council SHS Central Committee meeting of 23 November 1918, box 1.

Immediately after the delegation's arrival in Belgrade, the National Council members started preparing for the unification of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which was declared a month earlier, with the Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Montenegro. The day before the proclamation of the unification of the South Slavic nations – without Bulgarians – into one state and the establishment of the Kingdom of Srbs, Croats and Slovenes (1 December 1918), Regent Aleksandar Karađorđević received Rev. Šimrak in a special audience, and «convinced him firmly [...], that Croatian Catholics can look into the future with confidence».¹⁰¹

With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the creation of the first South Slavic state, the Seniorat's, i.e., the Seniorat-influenced HKP's Yugoslav orientation, achieved its full triumph.

«The supreme aim» of the Seniorat at that time, as expressed by its most prominent member in those days, P. Rogulja, was: «God has placed into our hands the future of South Slavs, He has entrusted us with the providential task of the Croatian, Serbian and Slovene nations, the main cause of the existence of our state. The [Croatian] Catholic Movement is the first to carry with most strength *the idea of the creation of a single Slavic culture in the South, the idea of the unification of Churches*. [...] Only then will a Serb or a Croat or a Slovene be a member of a single unified nation, then Yugoslavia will be a free homeland of the new South Slavic nation».¹⁰² Rogulja's «transcendental understanding» of the South Slavic state and national unification with the chances for the unification of the two Churches, which had been separated for almost one thousand years, fully coincided with Mahnič's ideas expressed earlier in *Novine*.

The expectation that in the Kingdom of SHS «the Catholic elements [would] prevail», or that «Croats [would] govern the new state»,¹⁰³ soon proved to be a fatal illusion for the Croatian people and its national interests, as well as Catholicism in this part of the world.

Translated by Ida Jurković

¹⁰¹ «Audijencija dra. Šimraka», *Narodna Politika*, 1 December 1918, p. 1.

¹⁰² P. Rogulja, «Vrhovni cilj», *Seniorski Vjesnik*, May 1919, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰³ Ivan Mužić, *Hrvatska politika i jugoslavenska ideja* (Split: Autorova vlastita naklada, 1969), p. 192.

Die kroatische katholische Bewegung und die Bildung des jugoslawischen Staates (1912-1918)

Zusammenfassung

Aufgrund der Literatur und erhaltenen Quellen, vorrangig der zeitgenössischen Presse, rekonstruierte der Autor des vorliegenden Artikels die politische Orientierung der kroatischen katholischen Bewegung gegen Ende der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie. Kroatische katholische Senioren, die Priester-Laien Elite der Bewegung, waren nicht nur entschlossene Befürworter der jugoslawischen Idee, sondern auch aktive Teilnehmer an der Bildung des jugoslawischen Staatsverbandes, des Königreiches der Serben, Kroaten und Slowenen.

