

УДК 327.83(456.31:497.1)"196"

DOI <https://doi.org/10.31212/tokovi.2023.1.dra.147-162>

Оригинални научни рад/Original scientific paper

Примљен/Received: 26. 1. 2022.

Прихваћен/Accepted: 23. 3. 2023.

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## **Yugoslav Catholic émigré clergy in the 1960s\***

**Abstract:** The paper deals with the Yugoslav Catholic émigré clergy in the 1960s. The research focuses on its institutions, the modus operandi of their anti-Yugoslav practice as well as on their impact on Croatian and Slovenian émigré milieu. The topic was examined in the broader context of the relations between Yugoslavia and the Holy See in the 1960s.

**Keywords:** émigré clergy, Yugoslavia, Vatican, Draganović, Cecelja

From its very beginning, socialist Yugoslavia was facing a multitude of huge challenges which severely undermined its already fragile foundations, thus eventually leading to the fiasco of this multi ethnic Balkan experiment in the early 1990s. Apart from several endemic domestic troubles, in particular ethnic tensions and relatively underdeveloped economy, the stability of Yugoslav system was gravely threatened by numerous communities of Yugoslav émigrés. Their propaganda and other subversive activities against the country of their origin posed permanent and considerable threat to the security of Yugoslavia. Moreover, the undeclared unconventional war between Yugoslav secret services and the anti-communist émigrés, which included even terrorist acts and assassinations, severely ruined the reputation of the communist establishment in Belgrade. The vast majority of Yugoslav émigrés were given a safe haven by Western governments, which generated considerable diplomatic

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\* This paper was written as a result of the work at the Institute for Recent History of Serbia, funded by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the RS, through the Agreement on Realization and Funding of Scientific Research NIO in 2023 No. 451-03-47/2023-01/200016 of 3 February 2023.

tensions. This peculiar and exhausting hybrid warfare culminated in active participation of émigrés in the process of dissolution of Yugoslavia and the wars of Yugoslav succession in the 1990s.<sup>1</sup>

### *Institutions of the émigré clergy*

Given the immense importance of this issue, Yugoslav security apparatus closely observed activities of émigrés. Consequently, Belgrade archives store large numbers of dossiers on anti-Yugoslav actions of the “sixth column”, which was a frequently used code name for Yugoslav “hostile emigration” in Yugoslav documents. According to Yugoslav sources, in the 1960s the Croats, of all Yugoslavs, posed the most serious threat to the stability of Yugoslavia. In this decade the most radical Croatian émigré organizations in the West were the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood (Hrvatsko revolucionarno bratstvo), the Croatian National Resistance (Hrvatski narodni odbor), the United Croats of Germany (Ujedinjeni Hrvati Njemačke), as well as Croatian National Committee (Hrvatski narodni odbor). Apart from these “secular” groups of Croat émigrés, the Croatian émigré milieu also included considerable clerical portion. The Yugoslav regime had no doubt about the primary goal of this Catholic network: “Most of these clerical organizations were created for the purpose of organized hostile work against Yugoslavia, which manifests itself in various forms, from open attacks to the most perfidious forms of espionage.”<sup>2</sup>

According to a document of the Federal Commission for Religious Affairs (Savezna komisija za verska pitanja), dated February 1964, Yugoslav Catholic emigration numbered more than 1200 priests and monks, originat-

1 On Yugoslav émigrés during the Cold War, see: Mark Arons, Džon Loftus, *Pacovski kanali*, (Banjaluka: Apis, 2012); Nikola Baković, “Tending the ‘oasis of socialism’. Transnational political mobilization of Yugoslav economic emigrants in the FR Germany in the late 1960s and 1970s”, *Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 4/2014, 674–690; Srđan Cvetković, „Terorizam i jugoslovenska politička emigracija”, *Istorijski vekovi* 2/2014, 171–197; Petar Dragišić, “Operation Phoenix in Yugoslavia in the Summer of 1972 and Yugoslav-Austrian Relations”, *Tokovi istorije* 3/2018, 87–106; Jareb Mario, „Hrvatska politička emigracija 1928–1990”, *Hrvatska politika u XX. stoljeću*, ur. Jelana Hekman, Ljubomir Antić, (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatske, 2006), 307–336; Mate Meštrović, *U vrtlogu hrvatske politike. Kazivanja Peri Zlataru*, (Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 2003); Bože Vukušić, *Tajni rat UDBE protiv hrvatskoga iseljeništva*, (Zagreb: Klub hrvatskih povratnika iz iseljeništva, 2001); Christian Axboe Nielsen, *Yugoslavia and Political Assassinations: The History and Legacy of Tito's Campaign Against the Emigrés*, (London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2020); Paul Hockenos, *Homeland calling: Exile Patriotism and the Balkan Wars*, (Cornell University Press, 2003).

2 Arhiv Jugoslavije (AJ), fond 144, Savezna komisija za verska pitanja, f. 82, Pregled klerikalnih organizacija u inostranstvu.

ing mostly from Slovenia (897), Croatia (271) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (92).<sup>3</sup> The vast majority of Catholic clerical émigrés resided in the USA, Italy, Austria, Argentina, Chile, Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>4</sup>

#### Yugoslav Catholic emigration in 1964<sup>5</sup>

USA	388
Italy	325
Austria	166
Argentina	133
Canada	21
Federal Republic of Germany	17
Other countries	218

In the mid-1960s, the most influential Yugoslav Catholic institutions abroad were Supreme Council for Emigration/Vrhovno vijeće za emigraciju, Croatian Committee for Aid for Refugees/Hrvatski odbor za pomoć izbjeglicama, College of St. Jerome/Zavod Svetog Jeronima, Slovenski socijalni odbor/Slovenian Social Committee (in Italy), Croatian Mission/Hrvatska misija, Cardinal Stepinac Fund/Fond kardinala Stepinca (in Federal Republic of Germany), Caritas Croata (in Austria), Croatian Mission/Hrvatska misija (in Switzerland, France and Spain), Association of Croatian Priests in the USA and Canada/Savez hrvatskih sveštenika u USA i Kanadi, Hercegovački franjevački komesarijat svete porodice u Čikagu/Herzegovinian Franciscan Commissariat of the Holy Family in Chicago, Slovenski franjevački komesarijat u Lemontu/Slovenian Franciscan Commissariat in Lemont, Liga američkih katoličkih Slovenčev/League of American Catholic Slovenians (in the USA), Hrvatski socijalni ured/Croatian Social Office, Jugoslovenska katolička misija/Yugoslav Catholic Mission (in France). In addition, significant number of Franciscans coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina found sanctuary at the Pontifical University of Saint Anthony (Pontificia Università Antonianum) in Rome. The document of the Federal Commission for Religious Affairs, dated November 1963, stated that the Bosnian Franciscans from the Antonianum (including Dominik Mandić),

3 AJ, 144-82, Sveštenička emigracija, 25 February 1964.

4 AJ, 144-82, Brojni pregled svećenika po zemljama.

5 Ibid.

like Croatian clergy from the College of St. Jerome, had fully supported evacuation of former Ustashes from Yugoslavia by providing them with safe haven throughout Italy and giving them “financial and moral assistance”.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to above mentioned institutions, many Catholic émigré clerics played a significant role in almost all secular organizations of Croatian and Slovenian émigrés, both in the remnants of old Croatian and Slovenian political parties (Croatian Peasant Party/Hrvatska seljačka stranka and Slovene People's Party/Slovenska ljudska stranka) and in organizations of Croatian and Slovenian émigrés founded following the Second World War, like Hrvatski demokratski odbor/Croatian Democratic Committee, Hrvatski oslobođilački pokret/Croatian Liberation Movement, Tajni ustaški pokret/Secret Ustasha Movement, Ujedinjeni Hrvati/ United Croats and Hrvatsko revolucionarno bratstvo/Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood.<sup>7</sup>

In Yugoslav sources the College of St. Jerome in Rome was described as a core of the “anti-Yugoslav, i. e. Croatian nationalism” already in the immediate postwar period, given its pivotal role in the clandestine evacuation of members of the Ustasha movement after the collapse of the Independent State of Croatia in May 1945. The Yugoslav Federal Commission for Religious Affairs underlined substantial contribution of the prominent leaders and members of the College: Krunoslav Draganović, Juraj Mađarec and Dominik Mandić. Among other things, the College financially supported Croatian émigrés and provided them with accommodation in its mansion in Rome. Moreover, the College donated a printing press to the émigrés in Fermo displaced persons camp (Marche), which was used for printing of their propaganda publications (books, newspapers, leaflets).<sup>8</sup>

In the mid-1960s, Herzegovinian Franciscan Commissariat in Chicago had round 60 members, most of whom originated from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Commissariat assisted the Ustasha émigrés in the USA in finding accommodation and employment. Moreover, in their organ *Danica* the Franciscans from Chicago were publishing articles hostile towards Yugoslavia. Besides, 41 members of the Commissariat were among 143 signatories of the letter of Catholic clerics to the President Dwight Eisenhower, on *repression of religious freedom* in Yugoslavia and the status of Croatia within the Yugoslav

6 AJ, 144-82, Sveštenička emigracija, 25 February 1964; AJ, 144-82, Institucije u kojima radi sveštenička emigracija, March 1964.

7 AJ, 144-82, Političko-propagandne akcije protiv SFRJ i učešće u emigrantskim organizacijama, 19 March 1964.

8 AJ, 144-82, Institucije u kojima radi sveštenička emigracija, March 1964.

federation.<sup>9</sup> In the 1960s the most prominent members of the Commissariat were Vasilj Vandelin (priest in the Jasenovac concentration camp during the Second World War), Serafim Vištica, Vjekoslav Bambir, Ferdinand Skoko and Jerko Kućan.<sup>10</sup>

A similar role in the Croatian émigré milieu played Croatian Committee for Aid for Refugees in Rome, Croatian Social Office in Paris and Croatian Missions in the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland and Spain. According to Yugoslav sources, they focused on supporting émigrés from Yugoslavia. Moreover, the Croatian Mission in West Germany was frequently financing anti-Yugoslav operations of Croatian émigrés. Unlike these Catholic organizations, the Association of Croatian Priests in the USA and Canada assumed rather political role in the confrontation with the Yugoslav regime. The Association initiated a number of propaganda campaigns which aimed at ruining the reputation of socialist Yugoslavia in the USA: the above-mentioned letter to the President Dwight Eisenhower in 1954, opposition to the extradition of Ustasha ex-interior minister Andrija Artuković, campaign against Tito's visit to the United States, public criticism of Yugoslav treatment of Archbishop Aloisius Stepinac and participation in Ustasha's events. The leader of the organization was former Stepinac's secretary Stjepan Lacković.<sup>11</sup> The clerical organizations of Slovenian émigrés focused on their mobilization against Yugoslavia. The vast majority of Slovenian clerics abroad were members of the Slovene People's Party. In the 1960s the most prominent leaders of Slovenian clerical organization abroad were Ignacij Kunstelj, Franc Zdešar, Ciril Turk, Čretnik Nace, Vinko Žakelj and Pavel Robič.<sup>12</sup>

In the early 1970s the most dominant Croatian Catholic émigré organizations were Croatian Historical Institute/Hrvatski povjesni institut in Rome, led by Krešimir Zorić, Association of Croatian Priests in the USA, Herzegovinian Franciscan Commissariat in the USA and Canada, whose leader was one of the most prominent Croatian clerics in exile, Dominik Mandić, Croatian Mission in Federal Republic of Germany (Nikola Šušnjar), Croatian Mission in France (Zdravko Ostojić) and Caritas Croata in Austria, led by Vilim Cecelja.<sup>13</sup>

9 Ibid; Ivica Lučić, „Katolička crkva u Bosni i Hercegovini u dokumentima Uprave državne bezbjednosti pedesetih godina 20. stoljeća”, *Croatica Cristiana Periodica* 83/2019, 212.

10 AJ, 144–82, Institucije u kojima radi sveštenička emigracija, March 1964.

11 Ibid; AJ, 144–82, Pregled klerikalnih organizacija u inostranstvu.

12 AJ, 144–82, Institucije u kojima radi sveštenička emigracija, March 1964.

13 AJ, fond 142, Socijalistički savez radnog naroda Jugoslavije, Državni sekretarijat za inostrane poslove, Str. Pov. br. 1634-VI, Savetovanje o problemima vezanim za aktivnost političke emigracije i potrebi stalne i koordinirane protuakcije, 5 June 1970.

According to Yugoslav sources, Vilim Cecelja was the leading figure of Croatian émigré clergy in Austria. During the Second World War he served as supreme military chaplain in the Independent State of Croatia. Consequently, following the war Cecelja was indicted for war crimes. Nevertheless, in the final stage of the war, he managed to escape to Austria thus avoiding severe punishment in post-war Yugoslavia. His organization, Caritas Croata, was founded for the purpose of supporting Ustasha fugitives. Furthermore, Cecelja took part in political, intelligence and even terrorist operations against Yugoslavia. He was also publishing a journal *Messenger of the Heart of Jesus and Mary/Glasnik srca Isusova i Marijina*, to promulgate his own political thoughts. Cecelja had a lot of contacts in Croatian émigré milieu, both in clerical and secular circles. As stated in the concise dossier, among the papers of the Federal Commission for Religious Affairs, Cecelja was connected with the most extreme representatives of Croatian emigration. Moreover, he was a member of the Croatian National Resistance/Hrvatski narodni otpor, one of the most influential organizations of Croatian émigrés. Thanks to his network of contacts in Croatia, Cecelja had access to confidential data on situation in his homeland.<sup>14</sup>

The central figure of Croatian Catholic emigration was undoubtedly Krunoslav Draganović. Prior to the Second World War, Draganović served as secretary of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Sarajevo. According to Yugoslav sources, during the World War II he became one of the architects of the oppression against Serbs in the Independent State of Croatia: "During the war, he distinguished himself as an Ustasha ideologue, making plans for the conversion of Serbs and their banishment from certain areas – thus providing substantial assistance to the Ustasha Office of colonization." Given his significant role in the Ustasha apparatus, after the war Draganović was indicted by Yugoslav communist authorities for war crimes. Nevertheless, like Cecelja, Draganović also escaped the punishment and soon advanced to one of the most prominent representatives of Croatian Catholic emigration in Italy, where he assumed the role of secretary of the Croatian College of St. Jerome.<sup>15</sup>

In the operation *Ratlines*, Draganović substantially contributed to evacuation of the Ustasha fugitives from Yugoslavia. Some sources suggest that it was Draganović who provided "poglavnik" Ante Pavelić with forged Peruvian

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14 AJ, 144–82, Vilim Cecelja, March 1964; AJ, 144–82, Institucije u kojima radi sveštenička emigracija, March 1964.

15 AJ, 144–82, Krunoslav Draganović, March 1964.

passport, thus enabling his escape to Italy.<sup>16</sup> Draganović actively participated in conducting propaganda, intelligence and terrorist operations against Yugoslavia. In addition to that, he was openly undermining reconciliation between the Yugoslav regime and the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. Similarly to Cecelja, Krunoslav Draganović also actively took part in the activities of the secular segment of the Croatian emigration. According to Yugoslav sources, he was an important figure in the Croatian Democratic Committee/Hrvatski demokratski odbor. Besides, Yugoslav security services speculated about Draganović's significant role in the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood.<sup>17</sup> Certain sources suggest Draganović's close connections with the Western intelligence systems which made him a *sui generis* VIP of the Cold War decades. Nevertheless, his glittering career ended abruptly in September 1967, when in mysterious circumstances he fell into the hands of the Yugoslav regime.<sup>18</sup>

### *Modus operandi*

As already mentioned above, in the immediate post-war period Croatian clerical organizations abroad enthusiastically helped the large-scale clandestine evacuation of Ustashas. After this great wave of migration, the émigré clergy continued to support the fugitives from the ex-NDH. In the 1960s, Croatian émigré clergy permanently campaigned against repatriation of Ustasha émigrés. For that purpose, they were lobbying not only secular and ecclesiastical authorities in the West (including Archbishop of Trieste Antonio Santin and Cardinal Franz König), but also international institutions like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). According to Yugoslav sources, Krsto Šušnjara, a member of the Croatian National Resistance in the Federal Republic of Germany, played particularly significant role in this diplomatic undertaking of the Croatian Catholic clergy in the West.<sup>19</sup>

Apart from overwhelming support for the Ustasha fugitives, the prominent Croatian clerics in exile undertook diverse propaganda activities for the purpose of propagating their anti-Yugoslav agenda. Almost immediately after the Second World War (in 1946), Krunoslav Draganović and his closest

16 Dragoljub Živojinović, *Vatikan, katolička crkva i jugoslovenska vlast 1941–1958*, (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2007), 247.

17 *Ibid.* On the operation Ratlines, see: Arons, Loftus, *Pacovski kanali*.

18 Radmila Radić, „Jugoslavija, Vatikan i slučaj Draganović 1967–1968. godine”, *1968 – četrdeset godina posle/1968 – Forty Years Later*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2008), 589.

19 AJ, 144–82, Pritisak klerikalne emigracije na crkvene funkcionere u inostranstvu da ulože svoj autoritet kod svojih vlada da se emigranti iz Jugoslavije ne deportuju u zemlju.

associates published a bilingual (Italian/English) book *Martirium Croatie*, targeting in particular the American public. In Yugoslavia, the publication was perceived as a segment of the propaganda campaign against the country. The book was distributed to the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church at the papal consistory. Eight years later, in a letter to President Eisenhower, Croatian émigré clergy asked for support for Croatian independence within the “free world”.<sup>20</sup>

Occasionally would Catholic émigré clergy try to use large Catholic public gatherings to disseminate their interpretations of the situation in Yugoslavia. In the summer 1960, the group of most prominent Croatian clerics, who attended the 37th International Eucharistic Congress, gave “anti-Yugoslav speeches” in a bid to draw attention to the “Croatian question”. In August 1962, at the commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia*, a group of Croatian clerics, led by Krunoslav Draganović, Krešimir Zorić and Milan Simčić, gave anti-Yugoslav speeches and notified certain American bishops of “inferior status of the Croatian people” and the Catholic Church in socialist Yugoslavia.<sup>21</sup>

Printed media played an important role in anti-Yugoslav propaganda campaign of the Yugoslav émigré clergy. In the 1960s, Slovenian and Croatian émigré clerics were publishing numerous journals thus widely disseminating their stand on the Yugoslav regime and the status of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia. An anonymous author of the report on the émigré press underlined that Slovenian clerical press abroad had made considerable impact on Slovenian political and labor emigrants. According to this document, the review *Omnes unum*, which was being published in Buenos Aires, was critically reporting on the status of the Catholic Church in Slovenia, referring primarily to data provided by Slovenian priests from Italy, Austria and France. In the 1960s, the review *Duhovno življenje* (Buenos Aires) was castigating the lack of religious freedom and persecutions of believers and clerics in Yugoslavia. Other influential journals of Slovenian émigré clergy were *Ave Maria* (Toronto), *Amerikanski Slovenec* (USA), *Glasilo Kranjsko-Slovenske katoliške jednote* (Cleveland, USA), *Ave Maria* (Lemont, USA), *Novi svet* (Chicago, USA), *Katoliški glas* (Gorizia, Italia) and *Naš tednik – kronika* (Klagenfurt, Austria).<sup>22</sup>

The most significant reviews of Croatian clergy in exile were *Danica* (USA), *Hrvatski katolički glasnik* (USA), *Glas sv. Antuna* (Latin America),

20 AJ, 144-82, Političko-propagandne akcije protiv SFRJ i učešće u emigrantskim organizacijama, 19/3/1964.

21 Ibid.

22 AJ, 144-82, Crkvena emigrantska štampa (1964).

*Osoba i duh* (Spain), *Glasnik srca Isusova i Marije* (Austria). The content of these journals was perceived in Belgrade as pro-Ustasha: “All these reviews condemn the situation in our country, write about the persecution of religion, church, clergy and Croats by the communist regime and call for various actions against the regime in Yugoslavia.”<sup>23</sup>

In addition to religious emigrant press, the cleric émigrés disseminated their spiritual and political views in a number of journals of secular Slovenian and Croatian emigration, like *Nezavisna država Hrvatska*, an organ of the United Croats. One of its correspondents was Oto Knežović, a prominent member of Herzegovinian Franciscan Commissariat of the Holy Family in Chicago. Knežović was a close companion of Ante Pavelić and an advocate of radical methods in the undeclared war against the Yugoslav regime.<sup>24</sup> Together with other distinguished Catholic clerics in exile, Lucijan Kordić from Switzerland, Ivan Tomas from Italy, Vilim Cecelja and Dominik Mandić, Oto Knežović cooperated also with *Hrvatska revija*, published in Argentina. As stated in a Yugoslav report on émigré press, in their articles they glorified Aloisius Stepinac and spoke against reconciliation between the Yugoslav regime and the Catholic Church.<sup>25</sup>

The émigré clergy participated even in the most radical actions against the Yugoslav interests, both in Yugoslavia and abroad. According to Yugoslav sources, the most prominent representatives of Croatian clerical emigration played significant role in a number of terrorist operations of exile Croats. In the immediate postwar period, Krunoslav Draganović firmly backed Ustasha guerrillas who vainly attempted to penetrate into Yugoslavia (Božidar Kavran, Ljubo Miloš).<sup>26</sup> In 1963 two Croatian clerics residing in Australia, Josip Kasić and Roko Romac, supported the terrorist operation of the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood in Yugoslavia, organizing their training in church facilities in Sydney suburb Woollahra. Moreover, prior to their failed operation in Yugoslavia (the guerrillas were captured by Yugoslav security forces), two members of the group, Stanko Zdrilić and Branko Podrug, came to Rome to

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid; AJ, 144–82, Knežović fra Oto.

25 AJ, 144–82, Crkvena emigrantska štampa (1964).

26 *Terorističke i špijunske akcije protiv FNR Jugoslavije, Otkrića sa zagrebačkog procesa protiv ustaške terorističko-špijunske grupe Kavran-Miloš*, (Zagreb: Društvo novinara NR Hrvatske, 1948); Stephen Dorrell, *MI6: Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty's Secret Intelligence Service*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 339; AJ, 144–82, Učešće klerikalne emigracije u terorističkim akcijama.

visit Krunoslav Draganović.<sup>27</sup> Besides, in November 1962, Father Rafael Medić (residing in Dortmund/Federal Republic of Germany) was involved in the attack on the Yugoslav trade mission in Bonn. In that incident the porter of the mission, Momčilo Popović, lost his life. The attack was carried out by Hrvatski križari (Kroatische Kreuzbruderschaft), an émigré organization founded in 1959 and led by Father Rafael Medić and two other exile Croats.<sup>28</sup> Underlining the role of Father Medić in the terrorist attack in Bonn, the Belgrade daily *Politika* portrayed him as an ideological leader of the “Ustasha terrorists in the Ruhr region”<sup>29</sup>

Yugoslav analysts cited the attack on the Yugoslav trade mission in West Germany as evidence of a crucial role of the émigré clergy in Croatian radical milieu abroad: “The Ustasha attack on our diplomatic mission in Bonn, which had a tragic epilogue – the murder of porter Popović – in which the priest Rafael Medić was directly involved – points to the fact that there are almost no Ustasha actions in which clerical emigration does not appear as an instigator or a direct participant.”<sup>30</sup>

#### *Yugoslavia, the Vatican and the Yugoslav émigré clergy*

The significant role of the Croatian émigré clergy in the propaganda and terrorist campaigns against Yugoslav interests, put this issue high on the agenda of negotiations between Yugoslavia and the Vatican on normalization of their bilateral relations, which had been cut in 1952, following the decision of the Pope Pius XII to appoint Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac as cardinal.<sup>31</sup> The death of conservative pontifex in 1958 and the more flexible global Weltanschauung

27 Ibid; Stuart Koshade, “The Internal Dynamics of Terrorist Cells: A Social Network Analysis of Terrorist Cells in an Australian Context”, Doctoral thesis, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, 2007, 177–178.

28 AJ, 144–82, Учеšće klerikalne emigracije u terorističkim akcijama; Alexander Clarkson, *Fragmented Fatherland: Immigration and Cold War Conflict in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945–1980*, (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), 65–68; Петар Драгишић, *Ко је пуцао у Југославију?: југословенска политичка емиграција на западу 1968–1980.*, (Београд: Институт за новију историју Србије, 2019), 97–100.

29 „Дивљање усташа у Западној Немачкој“, *Политика*, 2. 12. 1962.

30 AJ, 144–82, Учеšće klerikalne emigracije u terorističkim akcijama. In 1972 clerical emigration took part in the most ambitious undertaking of Croatian émigrés in their warfare against Yugoslavia. According to Yugoslav sources, Vilim Cecelja played a significant role in the operation Phoenix of the Croatian Revolutionary Brotherhood in western Bosnia. Драгишић, *Ко је пуцао у Југославију*, 141.

31 Dragoljub Živojinović, *Vatikan, katolička crkva i jugoslovenska vlast 1941–1958*, (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2007), 346–373.

of his successor, Pope John XXIII, opened the door to rapprochement between Belgrade and the Holy See. The protracted and difficult negotiations, which officially began in June 1964, resulted in signing the *Protocol on the Discussions between the Representatives of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Representatives of the Holy See*, two years later, which demonstrated the readiness of both Yugoslavia and the Vatican to compromise on burning bilateral issues.<sup>32</sup> The Protocol guaranteed the freedom of religion to the Catholic community in Yugoslavia, while recognizing jurisdiction of the Vatican over the Yugoslavia's Catholics. In addition, the regime in Belgrade and the Vatican announced the exchange of non-diplomatic representatives, which preceded the establishing of full diplomatic relations four years later.<sup>33</sup>

In return, the Vatican made several important concessions to the Yugoslav regime signaling its willingness to inhibit anti-Yugoslav activities of the Catholic clergy, both in Yugoslavia and abroad. The Holy See declared against political misuse of ecclesiastical and religious status of the Catholic clergy and condemned political terrorism and other "criminal acts of violence".<sup>34</sup> In the verbal statements, which were not part of the Protocol, the Vatican underlined its intention to prevent activities of the émigré clergy which could impede the reconciliation between Yugoslavia and the Holy See. Moreover, the Vatican expressed its readiness to ban political activism of the most important hub of Croatian émigrés – the College of St. Jerome.<sup>35</sup>

The assurances of the Vatican, given both in the Protocol and in the verbal statements, regarding the émigré clergy, were not a dead letter. Two years

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- 32 Peđa Radosavljević, *Odnosi između Jugoslavije i Svetе Stolice 1963–1978*, (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2012), 50–84; Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice 1945–1970, II*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2002), 453–505; Miroslav Akmadža, „Pregovori Svetе Stolice i Jugoslavije i potpisivanje protokola iz 1966. godine”, *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 2/2004, 475–483.
- 33 AJ, fond 837, Kabinet Predsednika Republike (KPR), I-5-b/119–2, Protokol o razgovorima koji su vođeni između predstavnika vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije i predstavnika Svetе Stolice; Petar Dragišić, “In Search of Modus Vivendi: Yugoslavia and the Holy See 1963–1971”, *Breaking Down Bipolarity. Yugoslavia’s Foreign Relations during the Cold War*, ed. Martin Previšić, (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021), 220–221.
- 34 AJ, KPR, I-5-b/119–2, Protokol o razgovorima koji su vođeni između predstavnika vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije i predstavnika Svetе Stolice; Radić, *Država i verske zajednice*, 532; Pino Adriano, Giorgio Cingolani, *Nationalism and terror. Ante Pavelić and Ustasha Terrorism from Fascism to the Cold War*, (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018), 427.
- 35 AJ, KPR, I-5-b/119–2, Prilog 2 – Verbalne izjave predstavnika Svetе Stolice; Dragišić, *In Search of Modus Vivendi*, 221.

after the signing of the Protocol the Yugoslav mission to the Holy See positively evaluated Vatican's implementation of the content of the Protocol and the bilateral verbal statements. The Yugoslav diplomats commended several measures taken by the Vatican to reduce the power of the Yugoslav/Croatian émigré clergy, such as removal of Croat émigré Ivan Tomas from the Radio Vatican, "cleansing" of the College of St. Jerome as well as removal of Krešimir Zorić from the Superior Council for Emigrants.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the authors of the Yugoslav document lauded the new position of the Holy See on the émigré issue: "If we briefly summarize the Vatican's attitude towards émigré clergy, it could be said that the Vatican follows the policy of cautious, subtle and balanced pressure on émigré clergy, in order to limit their anti-Yugoslav activities, at least the most extreme ones."<sup>37</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The Vatican's distancing from Catholic émigré clergy from Yugoslavia, following the signing of the Protocol in 1966, provoked an angry reaction of the émigré clerics, who vehemently opposed the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the Holy See. As stated in a document of the Yugoslav government, the Yugoslav émigré clergy lobbied against the reconciliation with the regime in Belgrade, condemning particularly the part of the Protocol in which the Holy See openly disapproved political violence.<sup>38</sup> A blatant example of the bitter disappointment of the Croatian émigré clergy with the reconciliation between Yugoslavia and the Vatican in the mid-1960s was a declaration of 22 prominent exile Croats, published in December 1966 in the review *Naša nada*, whose editorial board partially consisted of the émigré clerics. The signatories of the document underlined that it was Croatian people who had paid a high price for the agreement between the Holy See and the "terrorist regime"

<sup>36</sup> AJ, 144-116-698, Izaslanstvo Vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije pri Svetoj Stolici, Međunarodna orijentacija Vatikana / Odnosi između Vatikana i Jugoslavije / Vatikan i biskupske konferencije u Jugoslaviji / Vatikan i sveštenička emigracija, 21 October 1968; Radosavljević, *Odnosi između Jugoslavije i Svetе Stolice*, 115.

<sup>37</sup> AJ, 144-116-698, Izaslanstvo Vlade Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije pri Svetoj Stolici, Međunarodna orijentacija Vatikana / Odnosi između Vatikana i Jugoslavije / Vatikan i biskupske konferencije u Jugoslaviji / Vatikan i sveštenička emigracija, 21 October 1968.

<sup>38</sup> AJ, KPR, I-5-b/119 (1-2), Informacija o toku pregovora sa Vatikanom za sređivanje odnosa između Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije i Katoličke crkve / prema materijalima Saveznog izvršnog veća, 27 May 1966.

in Belgrade. The Protocol was labeled a capitulation to the communist regime and the Vatican was blamed for betraying the trust of the Croatian people.<sup>39</sup>

Four years later, in a report on Yugoslav “hostile emigration”, the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs underlined declining number of émigré clergy involved in anti-Yugoslav campaign, ascribing that to the reconciliation between Yugoslavia and the Holy See, the warnings of the Vatican against the political mobilization of the Yugoslav clergy as well as to the above-mentioned repatriation of Krunoslav Draganović. Nevertheless, according to the same document, certain number of the émigré clergy continued with hostile activities against Yugoslavia, vigorously opposing the implementation of the Protocol and the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the Holy See.<sup>40</sup>

### Summary

In the immediate post-war period, the Yugoslav émigré clergy contributed enormously to the evacuation of the remnants of the defeated forces (in particular Ustashas) from Yugoslavia and their clandestine transfer to the West. In the following decades, the émigré clerics posed permanent threat to Yugoslav interests both within Yugoslavia and abroad. Countless Croatian and Slovenian Catholic organizations in the West played pivotal role in the Croatian and Slovene émigré milieu. In the 1950s and 1960s the Catholic émigré clergy was lobbying against Western support for Yugoslavia and conducting a permanent anti-Yugoslav campaign in the émigré press. Moreover, the émigré clergy did not refrain from participating in terrorist activities against Yugoslavia.

Nevertheless, the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the Holy See in the mid-1960s considerably changed the position of the Vatican on the regime in Belgrade. Consequently, the Holy See was less willing to support radical anti-Yugoslav undertakings of the Catholic clergy, which paved the way to its partial depoliticization.

39 AJ, 144-101, Ambasada SFRJ u Vašingtonu – DSIP / Savezna komisija za verska pitanja, 14 December 1966.

40 AJ, 142-474, Državni sekretarijat za inostrane poslove, Savetovanje o problemima vezanim za aktivnost političke emigracije i potrebi stalne i koordinirane protuakcije, 5 June 1970.

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## Резиме

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### КЛЕРИКАЛНА КАТОЛИЧКА ЕМИГРАЦИЈА ИЗ ЈУГОСЛАВИЈЕ ШЕЗДЕСЕТИХ ГОДИНА

**Апстракт:** Чланак се бави југословенском католичком свештеничком емиграцијом шездесетих година. Истраживање је било усмерено на њихове институције, modus operandi њихове антијугословенске праксе, као и на њихову улогу у миљеу хрватске и словеначке емиграције. Тема је сагледана у ширем контексту односа Југославије и Свете Столице шездесетих година.

**Кључне речи:** емигрантско свештенство, Југославија, Ватикан, Драгановић, Цецеља

Непосредно по завршетку Другог светског рата југословенско католичко свештенство у емиграцији енормно је допринело евакуацији остатака поражених снага из Југославије (пре свега усташа) и њиховом пребацивању на Запад. Током деценија које су уследиле, католичко свештенство у емиграцији је представљало константну претњу по југословенске интересе у самој земљи и изван ње. Безбројне хрватске и словеначке организације на Западу играле су важну улогу у хрватском и словеначком емигрантском миљеу. Педесетих и шездесетих година југословенски католички емигрантски клер је лобирао против западне подршке Југославији и водио непрестану антијугословенску кампању у емигрантској штампи. Штавише, емигрантски клер се није уздржавао ни од учешћа у терористичким акцијама против Југославије.

Ипак, приближавање Југославије и Ватикана средином шездесетих година значајно је променило став Ватикана према режиму у Београду. Отуда је Света Столица у наредном периоду била мање склона давању подршке радикалним антијугословенским подухватима католичког клера у егзилу, што је отворило врата деполитизацији једног његовог дела.