

CONFERENCE

**“THE CHURCH AND THE PARTY-STATE IN  
COMMUNIST CROATIA AND POLAND FROM  
THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO  
THE MID-1950s”**

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Catholic University of Croatia, Zagreb,  
Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac’s Hall, 3rd Floor

Organizers:

Catholic University of Croatia, Zagreb

Institute of History of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw

Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb



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CONFERENCE

## “THE CHURCH AND THE PARTY-STATE IN COMMUNIST CROATIA AND POLAND FROM THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO THE MID-1950s”

### Conference Program

**Introduction, 9:30-10:00 AM**

**Panel I, 10:00-11:00 AM**

**Professor Ivica Miškulin** (Catholic University of Croatia, Zagreb),

**Breaking the Cross: Repression of Christian Churches in Eastern Europe 1945-1950**

**Associate professor Rafał Łatka** (Institute of History of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw/  
Office of Historical Research Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw),

**Steadfastness in fundamental matters, flexibility in secondary issues:  
Strategy of the Polish Episcopate towards the communist authorities 1945-1956**

**Professor Marek Kornat** (Institute of History of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński  
University/ Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw),

**Communist ideology and papal teaching (up to the Second Vatican Council)**

**Break, 11:00-11:15 AM**

**Panel II, 11:15 AM-12:40 PM**

**Professor Mirosław Szumiło** (Institute of History of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University,  
Lublin/ Office of Historical Research Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw),

**Liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church in Poland and Ukraine**

**Professor Tomislav Anić** (Catholic University of Croatia, Zagreb),

**The Catholic Church and the Communist Party: Reevaluation of Tradition from 1945  
to the mid-1950s.**

**Associate professor Adam Dziurok** (Institute of History of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw/  
Office of Historical Research Institute of National Remembrance Katowice Branch),

**Main directions of the activities of the security apparatus against the Catholic Church in Poland 1945-1956**

**Stipe Kljaić, PhD** (Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb),

**Political staged trials and repression of Catholic intelligentsia in Croatia (1945-1948)**

**Matija Knok** (Archdiocese of Zagreb),

**Catholic seminaries facing the challenges of post-war Yugoslavia**

**Concluding remarks, 12:40-13:00 PM**



**Professor Ivica Miškulin**

Catholic University of Croatia, Zagreb

***Breaking the Cross: Repression of Christian Churches in Eastern Europe  
1945-1950***

**Abstract**

Regardless of some differences in approach, the strike on Christians and Christian churches by the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe after the end of World War II was comprehensive. The above means that the first goal of the regime in the initial stage of people's democracies was the destruction of churches and the separation of believers from them. Therefore, one of the goals of this paper is to determine the fundamental forms of repression to which the Christian churches and Christian believers of Eastern Europe were subjected in 1945-1950. exposed. First of all, it is about murders, political trials, confiscation of property, banning of the religious press, etc. The next goal is to give a slightly more precise picture of each of the people's democracies of Eastern Europe, that is, the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania. Namely, although it is possible to determine a number of the same or very similar patterns of repression, it will also be shown that considerable differences in the treatment of individual regimes towards individual Christian churches were also important.

**Keywords:** Christian Churches; Eastern Europe; 1945-1950; repression

**Associate professor Rafał Łatka**

Institute of History of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw/ Office of Historical Research Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw

***Steadfastness in fundamental matters, flexibility in secondary issues: Strategy of the Polish Episcopate towards the communist authorities 1945-1956***

**Abstract**

The paper will examine the approach of the Polish Episcopate towards the communist authorities in the years 1945-1956. I will try to prove that the Episcopate's strategy was based on the implementation of a key principle: steadfastness in the most important matters combined with flexibility in secondary matters for the Church. Among the essentials were: liaison with the Holy See and the possibility of fulfilling the Church's pastoral mission. Secondary issues were considered to be actions in the political sphere or the annexation of a large part of the Church's property. This strategy brought positive results for the Polish Church, although it should be emphasised that the years 1953-1956 were particularly difficult, when the Episcopate operated without the imprisoned Primate Stefan Wyszyński.

**Keywords:** Polish Episcopate; authorities; communism; society; state-church relations

**Professor Marek Kornat**

Institute of History of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University/ Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

### ***Communist ideology and papal teaching (up to the Second Vatican Council)***

#### **Abstract**

The key-notion „communism” appeared in the Communist Manifesto (1848) of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Since this date – it functioned in the papal social teaching. The Popes Pius IX, Leo XIII, St. Pius X and Benedict XV mentioned negative attitude of the Church to the communist doctrine but they did not produce any special treatment of this ideology. Two popes of the XX-th century – Pius XI (1922—1939) and Pius XII (1939—1958) – made decisive contribution to the papal teaching on communist doctrine in the pre-conciliar Church. The first of them published the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* (1937) which is essential for the reconstruction of the catholic perception of the bolshevism and the Soviet system. By the decree of the second of them the belongingness of the catholics to the communist parties was forbidden (1949). Communist program has been condemned by Pius XI and Pius XII due to six major reasons: (1) communist ideology is *par excellence* materialist; (2) negating religion communism deprives human being the sub-natural perspective; (3) communist promise of the new world order is strictly connected with the idea of a revolutionary upheaval by the use of force; (4) communist ideology is totally negating the natural law; (5) communist doctrine promotes collectivism against personalism; (6) communist conception of the State is totalitarian and it does not recognize any limits of the public authorities on human beings.

#### **Keywords:**

Communism; Pius XI; Pius XII; Holy See; Bolshevik revolution

**Professor Mirosław Szumilo**

Institute of History of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin/ Office of Historical Research Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw

***Liquidation of the Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine and Poland after World War II***

**Abstract**

The subject of the paper is the process of liquidation by the communist authorities of the structures of the Greek Catholic Church existing in Western Ukraine and Poland.

This happened after World War II, as a result of which the western lands of today's Ukraine were separated from Poland and incorporated into the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, a communist party strictly subordinated to the authorities in Moscow took power in the "new" Poland.

On Stalin's orders, the communist services initiated in 1946 the process of the allegedly voluntary return of Greek Catholics to the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. The Orthodox Church was fully dependent on the authorities. The operation was preceded by the arrest of the Metropolitan of Lviv, Josyp Slipyj, 4 bishops and many priests. The culmination of the "unification" campaign took place at the so-called Lviv Synod (Sobor) in March 1946, when an assembly of appointed hierarchs "annulled" the Union of Brest.

Over 400,000 believers of the Greek Orthodox Church remained in Poland. They were subjected to displacement and the clergy were subjected to severe repression. The Greek Catholic Church in Poland was formally dissolved.

**Keywords:** Greek Catholic Church; Soviet Ukraine, Poland; liquidation

**Professor Tomislav Anić**

Catholic University of Croatia, Zagreb

***The Catholic Church and the Communist Party: Revaluation of Tradition  
from 1945 to the mid-1950s.***

**Abstract**

The model of socio-political organization applied in Yugoslavia after the Second World War relied on a strong wave of atheist propaganda. The attitude towards the Catholic Church was based on the model of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). It meant that traditional values had to be transformed radically. In the new value system after the Second World War, the Catholic Church was the most discredited institution, and the reason for that was that the communists marked it as a political threat. The paper will problematize the relationship of the Communist Party towards the Catholic Church and its historical heritage and tradition.

**Keywords:** Catholic Church; Communist Party; atheist propaganda, Yugoslavia



**Associate professor Adam Dziurok**

Institute of History of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw/ Office of Historical Research Institute of National Remembrance Katowice Branch

***Main directions of the activities of the security apparatus against the Catholic Church in Poland 1945-1956***

**Abstract**

The security apparatus in Poland carried out the tasks set by the communist party (the Polish Workers' Party and, from the end of 1948, the Polish United Workers' Party). In line with the party's confessional policy, initially efforts were made to maintain correct relations with the Catholic Church hierarchy. This was due to the weakness of the government, which had to fight against political and armed opposition. However, the breakthrough came as early as 1947, when the Minister of Public Security declared that "the most organised reactionary authority characterised by the highest level of unification and almost untouched by us is definitely the clergy." A systematic crackdown on selected church circles began then, although investigations of structures and people of the Church started to have first noticeable effects only in mid-1949. It was also then that a breakthrough in the agents' recruitment in Church structures was made. During Stalinism, the Office of Public Security used several hundred of agents and informers, both among clergy and laity, for its operations. Officers of the security apparatus were involved in arresting the clergy (primarily participants in anti-communist armed resistance), but they also took steps to undermine the Church's potential in schools, youth organisations, the press and charitable organisations. The special services also began to increasingly invigilate seminaries, bishop's curia and convents. The anti-church activities of the security apparatus weakened in the mid-1950s. and especially in connection with the events of October 1956.

**Keywords:** security apparatus; Poland; Catholic Church; invigilation; anti-Church policy; Stalinism

**Stipe Kljaić, PhD**

Croatian Institute of History, Zagreb

***Political staged trials and repression of Catholic intelligentsia in Croatia  
(1945-1948)***

**Abstract**

Verdicts against Catholic intellectuals were handed down based on verbal delict and their criticism of communism and the restoration of the Yugoslav state. There is no detailed legal analysis of the delict in them. They are written in general terms and without in-depth consideration of the work of intellectuals. As a rule, there is no mention in the verdicts of the possible ideological commitment of the convicted in the sense of their agreement with fascism in the generic sense of the word. They were opponents of communism. These were revolutionary verdicts, and some were passed only after the liquidation of some of the Catholic intellectuals to satisfy the legal form. The source that served the communist authorities as a basis for indictment and persecution was the work of the “Commission of Inquiry of Croatia to Determine the Crimes of cultural cooperation with the Enemy”, which was part of “The Land's Commission of Croatia to Determine the Crimes of the occupiers and their helpers”. The Commission of Inquiry collected 'evidence' about the hostile activities of intellectuals during the Second World War. The verdicts were very often those of death by firing squad and long prison terms. Convicts were regularly deprived of their civil rights and had their property confiscated.

**Keywords:** Catholic intellectuals; communism; staged trials; verdicts

**Matija Knok**

Archdiocese of Zagreb

## *Catholic seminaries facing the challenges of post-war Yugoslavia*

### **Abstract**

Religious schools and seminaries were subjected to the large confiscation of property from the Catholic Church that followed the creation of the new communist Yugoslavia in Croatian lands. In this way, the authorities tried to make it impossible or as difficult as possible for the Church to spiritually educate and train new priests, and to repurpose the existing infrastructure for other purposes. Gymnasiums, which had the right of public access, were closely related to the seminaries. In addition to seminaries, courses, and boarding schools were very important for the Church as educational institutions for high school youth.

The seminary and gymnasium at Šalata in Zagreb could serve as an example of the new government's approach to seminaries. Namely, these buildings were occupied the day after the Yugoslav Army entered the city. The premises were turned into a military hospital already during the Second World War, but even under these conditions the school and the seminary could continue to work. The new administration occupied more and more premises and soon made any form of work impossible. The military hospital also moved into the premises of the Split Seminary. Furthermore, the Požega dormitory was occupied by the Yugoslav Army after the occupation by the German military. The Dubrovnik college was transformed into a city archive. In some places, public schools were moved to the premises of the Church.

**Keywords:** Catholic seminaries; Catholic schools; post-war Yugoslavia; confiscation of property

