

The British Foreign Office on the Situation of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, 1951–53*

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On 28 November 1951, Ivo Mallet, British ambassador to Belgrade (1951–1954),¹ sent a telegram to the Foreign Office about an article published in *Borba*, the official daily paper of the Yugoslavian Communist Party (YCP). The article was the written version of the interview of the YCP Party Secretary, Josip Broz Tito with Drew Pearson, an American journalist. The Yugoslav Party Secretary answered one of the questions the following way: “Finally, I am in a position to tell you that, with or without Vatican consent, we shall settle the question of Stepinac,² within the next month at the latest, though it is obvious that he can no longer perform the functions of a high dignitary of the church inside our country.”³ That was the first time that Tito directly indicated the release of the Croatian archbishop, who had been in prison since autumn 1946. Indeed, the archbishop was released on December 5, 1951.⁴ The event seemed to indicate that the regime started a more liberal religious policy as opposed to the complete subjugation of the Christian faith and the Christian churches, which had characterized the line of

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¹ Sir William Ivo Mallet, British ambassador to Yugoslavia between 1951 and 1954, and to Spain between 1954 and 1960.

² Alojzije Stepinac (1898–1960), archbishop of Zagreb, cardinal. He was appointed archbishop in 1937. During World War II he pursued a controversial policy. Even if he did not condemn openly the *ustaše* regime, he criticized the mass conversion of the Serbs to the Catholic faith. For the above-mentioned controversial role, he was sentenced to 16 years of imprisonment in a show trial in 1946. He was released in 1951 to house arrest at his native village. His beatification in 1998 divided public opinion again.

³ Foreign Office Papers, Political Files, The National Archives – Public Records Office, London, (henceforth: PRO FO) 371/95572 RY 1781/79.

⁴ The archbishop was transferred to his native village, Krašnić, where he was put in charge of the local parish.

the official policy so far and was carried out in various ways.⁵ Still, only a little bit later than a year, on December 17, 1952, Yugoslavia denounced the diplomatic relations with the Vatican and re-started its anticlerical campaign with even more intensity.

The aim of this article is to analyze the motives behind the above mentioned two steps of the Yugoslav government as it was seen by the British diplomatic corps in Belgrade in order to offer a clear picture on the situation of the Catholic Church, and therefore the Catholic faith in a country at the time when the primary interest of the Yugoslav communist leadership was to consolidate Western diplomatic relations after the escalation of the Soviet-Yugoslav conflict, which broke out in 1948.⁶

The detention of Archbishop Stepinac seriously worried the Yugoslav leadership because his captivity greatly complicated their relationship with the Vatican. Moreover, they had no interest in making a martyr of him. This can be indicated from the references the Yugoslav leaders made on his possible release, conditional upon his immediate leaving of the country. The Yugoslav deputy foreign minister, Aleš Bebler, also made this clear during his conversation with the papal legate, Monsignor Oddi on 2 June 1951, and the official Yugoslav news agency (Tanjug) communicated it on 5 July 1951.⁷ Another possible explanation for the archbishop's release can be found in the main aim of the Yugoslav government, namely to create a Croatian national church, similarly to the Serbian Orthodox Church, which they considered easier to oversee and control, it being detached from the Vatican.⁸ In this bargaining, it was Stepinac himself who was the most important card in the hands of the Yugoslav leaders.

The change in the Yugoslav opinion is interesting because even as late as the autumn of 1950, Tito, fearing the possible negative reaction of the Orthodox Serbs, who were disturbed by Stepinac's deeds during World War II, refused the

⁵ The methods the Yugoslav Communist used against the churches varied systematically, from propaganda war through the imprisonment of the priesthood, attacks against church personnel and property to the suppression of religious education.

⁶ For the relations between the Communist state and the different religions see: S. Alexander, *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*. Cambridge-New York 1974, for the position of the Catholic church in Croatia and the relations between Yugoslavia and the Vatican see: M. Akmadža, "The Position of the Catholic Church in Croatia 1945-1970," *Review of Croatian History* 2:1 (2006), 89-115.

⁷ TNA PRO FO 371/95571 RY1781/56 and PRO FO 371/95571 RY 1781/58. In his telegram on 30 June, Peake mentioned that Tito had been ready to do that as early as in 1946. Moreover, Vladimir Bakarić, Prime Minister and Party Secretary of Croatia, visited Stepinac in the Lepoglava prison in May 1947 and offered an amnesty to him if he left the country immediately. M. Akmadža-A. Vlašić, "Vladimir Bakarić's Stance towards the Catholic Church in Croatia 1945-1953," *Review of Croatian History* 3:1 (2008), 167.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 164-168.

release of the Croatian archbishop.⁹ On the other hand, as the under-secretary of the Holy See, Cardinal Tardini,¹⁰ set it forth to the British legate to the Holy See, Somers-Cocks on 15 February 1951, the most important aim of the Vatican was to guarantee free church services and teaching in religious spirit. Everything else, including the fortune of Stepinac, was of minor importance for them: "What the Catholic Church required was the right to carry out its apostolate, i. e. the right to preach and teach freely. Everything else was incidental, not only Church property but even Archbishop Stepinac."¹¹ Still, at least in public, the Vatican authorities emphasized that no change had occurred in their condemnation of the archbishop's trial. Moreover, they expressed that the Holy See respected and accepted Stepinac's opinion of being fully aware of his innocence: "Views of the Holy See regarding the trial and condemnation of Archbishop Stepinac are well known. It is obvious therefore that the Holy See would welcome the liberation of the Archbishop. [The] Holy See learns, however, that Archbishop Stepinac, being convinced of his innocence, prefers to remain near his flock. [The] Holy See cannot but respect these sentiments and consequently does not intend to impose a separation which would be opposed to Mgr. Stepinac's conception of his duty."¹² Therefore, another factor in Yugoslav foreign policy must have played a crucial role in the archbishop's final release. Namely, in autumn 1950, a bill on the aid to Yugoslav economy came on the agenda of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Congress of the United States.¹³ The Yugoslavs feared that the bill, which aimed to help the disastrous Yugoslav economy, might be opposed by some religious members of the committee¹⁴ who demanded the immediate release of the archbishop in exchange for supporting the bill. As for the British ambassador to Belgrade, Ivo Mallet traced it back to the above-mentioned proviso in his letter to the Foreign Office on 30 November 1951, written at the time when the archbishop was still in prison. In this letter, Mallet expressed his opinion that, on the one hand, Tito might have had enough of the continuous harassment of those mem-

⁹ On the other hand, in his telegram on 27 November 1950, Peake thought that Tito's opinion rather changed because he did not want to admit that he made political concessions for the American economic aid. PRO FO 371/88352 RY 1783/29.

¹⁰ Domenico Tardini (1888–1961) cardinal and politician. Pro-Secretary of State, for Extraordinary and Ordinary affairs from 1952, Cardinal Secretary of State from 1958 to 1961.

¹¹ PRO FO 371/95571 RY 1781/33.

¹² The extract was the official answer of the Holy See to the note of the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was made public in the 9–10 November 1950 issue of *L'Osservatore Romano*. PRO FO 371/95572 RY 1781/62.

¹³ The foreign economic aid was seriously needed in Yugoslavia because critical food shortage emerged as a result of the forced industrial policy of the regime and the drought.

¹⁴ Among them Brien McMahon (1903–1952), Democrat member of the United States Senate from Connecticut between 1945 to 1952, the only Catholic member of the Senate that time. He met Tito in July 1951. For this see: PRO FO 371/95572 RY 1781/68. McMahon is famous for the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission, through his authorship of the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 (the McMahon Act).

bers of the Congress, who had visited him that year, on the other hand, the Yugoslav leader wanted to avoid the impression that he was forced to bow before a possible American political pressure.¹⁵

Apart from the archbishop's fate, the British Foreign Office was equally interested in the situation of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia in general. Therefore, on 1 March 1952, Ivo Mallet prepared a long report dealing with the situation of the Catholic Church and the Catholic faith under Tito's regime. While the ambassador observed and pointed out certain liberal tendencies in the economic and political life of the country, it did not escape his attention that, in case of religion, exactly the opposite was true. Therefore, he prepared a brief summary on the main events preceding and leading to the rather tense relationship between the Yugoslav state and the Catholic church in the country. Beginning in 1945, as Mallet emphasized, anticlerical propaganda was first mainly carried out in Slovenia. Moreover, the Communist regime was not against religious education at that time, neither intervened in the training of Catholic priests or the managing of church property. According to him, the *modus vivendi* was maintained even in 1950, although this might also be influenced by the opinion of the American public and its impact in the aid policy towards Yugoslavia. In Mallet's interpretation, the situation of the Catholic church worsened drastically in 1951, partly because the Yugoslav authorities initiated a trial against the Catholic seminar in Zagreb with the accusation of conspiracy against the state. The political impact of the trial was rendered more serious by other incidents. For example, the bishop of Maribor was criticized in the local press on such unfounded charges that the pilgrims cut out the red star from the Yugoslav flag during the procession at Ptuj on 31 August that year. As a result, the bishop of Ljubljana was brutally beaten and the authorities turned the trial of the perpetrators into an anti-clerical mockery. In the ambassador's opinion, the incident clearly reflected the indifference of the authorities towards such insults. According to Mallet, the Catholic church was attacked on three fronts: children's education, priests' training and fund raising, the last of which had been sanctioned only in Bosnia Herzegovina so far.¹⁶ The ambassador also pointed out that although it was still possible to receive religious instruction in primary schools, it was only permitted through the Society of Cyril and Method in Slovenia. In Croatia, where such priest organizations did not exist that time, certain priests, loyal to the government, were authorized for such instruction, in about 20 per cent of the Croatian schools. Later, the Slovenian government, in a decree issued on 1 February, forbade religious instruction in schools altogether, which was followed by similar steps in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina. Those pupils who, infringing the prohibition, still learned religious instruction were failed at the exams at the end of the school year. Similar meth-

¹⁵ PRO FO 371/95572 RY 1781/82.

¹⁶ The restrictions were easier to be carried out in Bosnia Herzegovina because of the ethnically mixed population, compared to the Catholic Slovenia or the dominantly Catholic Croatia where, except the Orthodox Serbs, the population was Roman Catholic.

ods were used in trying to make the priests' training impossible. For example, the theological institutes in Ljubljana and Zagreb were shut by the authorities,¹⁷ who also tried to force the local priests into state organizations, similar to the trade unions.¹⁸

Therefore, according to Mallet, real changes took place during the autumn of 1951, exactly when Stepinac's release was again put on the government agenda. In his opinion, one of the first signs of these changes was that the attacks against the Slovenian priests became more frequent. One of them was shot in October and others were so seriously beaten that they had to be taken to hospital. Moreover, the attacks against the ordinary priesthood were not limited to Slovenia but spread over to Croatia and the Dalmatian coast, where, until recently, the Catholic church had enjoyed a "relative calm." The British ambassador also mentioned in his analysis that the propaganda attack against the Catholic church intensified in the Yugoslav press, too. For example, the leading Croatian daily, *Vjestnik*, accused the Vatican that it had supported the Croatian *ustaša* movement during World War II. According to the British ambassador, all of these measures indicated that the regime shifted the focus of accusations from the Catholic clergy to the Catholic faith itself.¹⁹ However, Mallet could only name a few possible reasons for this change of attitude. The decision could be influenced by the fact that the Yugoslav leadership identified the Catholic church with the Vatican's policy but he rejected this possibility. Instead, he tried to localize the reasons somewhere else and realized that the anti-religious campaign made it more difficult for the Yugoslavs to approach the Western powers. Therefore, he suggested that some internal development be the main reason for this political shift, namely, tensions among the members of the Yugoslav Communist leadership. As the Vatican's reaction to the Yugoslav gesture of releasing Stepinac was rather cold, the moderate members of the party leadership might have thought that the Yugoslavs' concession was rather useless. Moreover, as far as Mallet understood, it became more and more difficult for Tito and the other members of the Yugoslav leadership to keep the left wing of the party, which accused the leaders of smearing the Marxist

¹⁷ Before the closing down of the theology seminars, the buildings of the denominational schools were confiscated based on a law passed in 1945 prohibiting the maintenance of private education. The law also stated that the responsible ministry had jurisdiction over the authorization of theology education. This later was banned in 1947, although the boys' seminar in Zagreb was allowed to function until 1948. Akmadža-Vlašić, "Vladimir Bakarić's Stance," 168.

¹⁸ For example, the Cyril and Method Society in Slovenia, which gathered 39 per cent of the Slovenian priesthood. The similar organisation in Bosnia Herzegovina, for the above-mentioned reason, gathered 80 per cent of the Catholic priests in the republic. According to Mallet, a similar organization was planned in Croatia, too. PRO FO 371/102668 WY 1783/2. In Croatia, the process started in 1947, first among the priests on the Istrian Peninsula. Akmadža-Vlašić, "Vladimir Bakarić's Stance," 167.

¹⁹ In his speech in the Politburo of the Croatian Communist Party on 24 August 1946, Vladimir Bakarić stated just the opposite of it: „One should attack the priests, not religion." *Ibid.*, 162.

ideology while advancing towards the West, silent. Still, for Mallet, another possible reason could be rooted in Communist ideology itself because atheism made it impossible not to attack religion.²⁰

One may ask how the British public reacted to this facet of Yugoslav policy. It can be stated that the British public opinion showed great concern about the fate of Stepinac, and about the situation of religion in Yugoslavia in general. Private letters, copies of inquiring letters sent to the Members of Parliaments from their voters, proposals and memoranda of various Yugoslav organizations in exile reached the Foreign Office, sometimes on a daily basis and especially at the end of 1952 and early 1953, as Tito's visit to Great Britain drew closer. Still, the Foreign Office always formulated a non-committal reply as the answer of the Parliamentary Secretary of State, Ernest Davies to a Member of Parliament on 1 January 1951 clearly illustrates: "His Majesty's Government have never sought to condone religious intolerance in any part of the world and are in favor of complete freedom of religion. For your personal information His Majesty's Ambassador in Yugoslavia will continue to take any opportunity that may present itself to keep before the Yugoslav Government the fact that public opinion in this country is concerned with the instances to the contrary, such as the imprisonment of Archbishop Stepinac."²¹ But they did not wish to interfere in Yugoslav internal affairs.

One may also ask whether such attacks were restricted to the Catholic church or a similar process characterized the relationship between the Yugoslav state and other religions. In Mallet's above mentioned analysis, the British ambassador dealt with the situation of the Orthodox church, the other large Christian faith in Yugoslavia and reported on similar unfavorable tendencies. The press carried out a propaganda campaign not only against the Catholics but also against the Orthodox believers; many Orthodox churches were looted during the previous years. Moreover, the leaders of the Orthodox theological faculty in Belgrade were informed in a threatening letter about their "being liquidated by 28 June."²²

The British ambassador to Belgrade prepared a more detailed analysis of the situation of the Orthodox church on 3 July 1952 in which he dealt with the annual meeting of the Council of Serbian Orthodox Bishops in particular and the Serbian Orthodox Church in general. In this report, the British ambassador emphasized that the Serbian church, as a result of its organization and history, was more vulnerable than the Catholics, who had a superior foreign authority (namely the Vatican) above their national organizational structure. As the Serbian Orthodox Church was a national church in the real meaning of the world, it lacked that kind of protection, even if it was a member of the Orthodox World Council. Therefore, it was more exposed to the secular authorities. Moreover, its religious

²⁰ PRO FO 371/102668 WY 1783/2.

²¹ PRO FO 371/88352 RY1783/56.

²² PRO FO 371/102268 WY 1783/2.

teaching practice was made nearly impossible after the World War,²³ which could be impossible in case of the Catholics or the Muslims. The Communist authorities had aimed to form a direct control over the Orthodox church since their coming into power. As at first attempt, they formed the Alliance of Orthodox Priests, which, even if under duress, 80 per cent of the priesthood had joined. The fact that only a few people were willing to join the priesthood resulted to an acute problem, which was further intensified by the fact that only two priest seminars existed, one at Rakovica, in the neighborhood of Belgrade, the other at Prizren, in today southern Kosovo, housing and training about 3 hundred students when at least a thousand were necessary.²⁴ Hundreds of churches were abandoned because the Church lacked the financial resources for their maintenance.²⁵

Another form of submission of the Orthodox Church to state power was the election of a new patriarch loyal to the state, Vikentije II, after the death of Gavriilo²⁶ on 3 May 1950²⁷ as it was reported by the then British ambassador to Belgrade, Sir Charles Peake.²⁸ Peake considered Vikentije a puppet because the new patriarch lacked a wide-span church career which would have qualified him for the new title on its own. Moreover, Josip, the metropolitan of Skoplje, head of the Holy Synod,²⁹ was arrested on 24 June, shortly before the election of the new patriarch took place.

Although the grievances they suffered were similar, it would be premature to suppose a real rapprochement between the two Christian churches. Mallet came to a similar conclusion, too, and mentioned in his letter on 13 November 1952 that it would be impossible to leave 900 years of suspicion and distrust behind, espe-

²³ During World War II, Serbian priesthood suffered serious losses. About a quarter or a fifth of its clergy died and six of its bishops were executed, three of them by the ustaše. Nearly half of the churches and monasteries were demolished in the fights. S. P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel. Politics, Culture, and Religion in Yugoslavia*. Boulder 1992, 145-146, 150-151.

²⁴ PRO FO 371/95573 RY 1782/1.

²⁵ PRO FO 371/102268 WY 1783/3.

²⁶ Gavriilo Dožić (1881-1950), Serbian Orthodox Patriarch between 1938 and 1950. He was interned in the Dachau concentration camp because he had condemned Yugoslavia's signing of the Tripartite Act with Nazi Germany. He was freed in the summer of 1945 and returned to Yugoslavia in 1946.

²⁷ Vikentije Prodanov (1890-1958), bishop of Zletovo and Strumica, Orthodox Patriarch from 1950.

²⁸ Sir Charles Brinsley Prembleton Peake (1897-1958), British ambassador to Yugoslavia between 1946 and 1951, then British ambassador to Greece.

²⁹ During the inaugural ceremony, the new patriarch received the veneration of the other prelates while sitting on the throne. Then, contrary to traditions, he stood up and shook hands with the state and party dignitaries present at the ceremony. Peake took it as a symbol of loyalty to the Communist leadership. PRO FO 371/88351 RY 1783/9. It is an interesting parallel that Josip was released from the Trstenik monastery where he was under house arrest on 29 November 1951, a few days earlier than Stepinac was transferred to his native village, probably in an effort to soothe the expected Serb opposition to the release of the Croatian archbishop. PRO FO 371/95572 RY 1781/82.

cially because only 7 years had passed since World War II when these grievances manifested themselves in violent outleashes. The British ambassador reminded the Foreign Office that the Croatian Catholic church was still generally associated with Pavelić's Croatian *ustase*, just as the politics of the Vatican with Italian irredentism towards Yugoslavia.³⁰

That is to say, the question of Trieste escalated again between Yugoslavia and Italy in 1952 and to make things more complicated, the Italian prime minister, Alcide de Gasperi³¹ adopted a more severe attitude as the parliamentary elections came closer. At the same time, as a result of the intensified Yugoslav-Turkish and Yugoslav-Greek rapprochement,³² Tito lost his interest in good neighbourly relations with Italy. Under these circumstances, it was highly unfortunate that the official view of the Holy See, probably because of the Yugoslav attacks against the Catholic faith, stiffened. Moreover, the Pope promoted Stepinac to cardinal the same year, which was considered as an interference with the internal affairs of Yugoslavia by the authorities.³³ The papal legate, Tardini changed his view, too, as it can be deduced from the dispatch of the British legate to the Holy See to the Foreign Office on 5 December 1952. According to the dispatch, Tardini made it clear that the position of the Vatican on Stepinac's case had remained firm and the only reason for its modification would be a general settlement between the Vatican and Yugoslavia: "Nevertheless, if it should be possible to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Yugoslav Government [...] Monsignor Tardini did not suppose that it would be impossible to solve the particular problem of Monsignor Stepinac."³⁴ However, the British legate did not consider it feasible, especially because that "indeed might well compromise the whole position of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia, as it has already been compromised in varying degrees in some other Communist controlled countries."³⁵ The conflict of different interests resulted in Yugoslavia's denunciation of diplomatic relations with the Holy See on 17 December 1952 and it was restored only in 1970.

The reasons leading to the denunciation were most aptly enumerated in the speech of the Yugoslav Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edvard Kardelj³⁶ in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Yugoslav federal parliament, the Škupsčina, on 18

³⁰ PRO FO 371/102268 WY 1783/8.

³¹ Alcide de Gasperi (1881-1954), Italian statesman and politician, founder of the Italian Christian Democratic Party. From 1945 to 1953 he was the prime minister of Italy. Before his death, he was the president of the European Parliament.

³² The result of this rapprochement was a short lived military treaty, the so called Balkan Pact, which was signed in Ankara, Turkey, on 9 August 1954.

³³ Akmadža and Vlašić considers the establishment of priest organizations as the real cause of the Vatican's interference with the internal affairs of Yugoslavia. Akmadža-Vlašić, "Vladimir Bakarić's Stance," 170. Mallet considered Stepinac's appointment as a good pretext. PRO FO 371/102266 WY 1781/30.

³⁴ PRO FO 371/102266 WY 1781/21.

³⁵ PRO FO 371/102266 WY 1781/21.

³⁶ Edvard Kardelj (1910-979), Slovenian born Communist politician, one of the main theoretician of self-management, minister of foreign affairs between 1948 and 1953.

December. His speech also gives a clear picture of his government's opinion concerning religion in general. In his speech, Kardelj expressed his conviction that the foreign press campaign on the situation of the churches in Yugoslavia was intensified because of Tito's upcoming visit to Great Britain in the following March.³⁷ Moreover, Kardelj regarded religion as a social phenomenon, which was impossible to exterminate by persecution but that was otherwise uncharacteristic of the Yugoslav state. Kardelj again stated that "[a] *modus vivendi* with the Roman Catholic Church [wa]s still [...] quite possible. The main condition [wa]s that the Church should limit itself to religion. Individual priests need not be excluded from political activity, but only within the framework of the existing social forms. The Yugoslav Government does not demand that the Churches or individual priests should make propaganda for Communism, less socialism. It does not demand that they should detach themselves from the Vatican but they must take a patriotic attitude" and he concluded his speech with a famous proverb: "and render to Ceasar the things that are Ceasar's."³⁸

Still, the circumstances gradually improved. A law on the legal situation of the Catholic Church was passed on 27 April 1953 and less retaliation against Christian believers took place. Real improvement started after Stepinac's death in 1960, which resulted in the signing of a protocol between the two parties in 1966. Finally, diplomatic relations were restored in 1970 and Tito visited the Vatican in 1971.³⁹

The aim of this article was to analyze how the British Foreign Office saw the situation of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia in general and the case of Archbishop Stepinac in particular in the early 1950s. As it can be seen in the article, the Yugoslav Communist regime pursued its policy against the Catholic Church through various methods and with varied intensity. The already complex relationship between the Yugoslav government and the Catholic hierarchy was further complicated among other things by the personal fate of Archbishop Stepinac, of whom the Yugoslavs refused to make a martyr; the bad economic situation of the country, which made Western economic help inevitable; the left wing of the Communist party, which opposed further rapprochement with the West; and such factors in foreign policy as the Italian general elections in 1952 or the Yugoslav-Greek and the Yugoslav-Turkish rapprochement; not to mention the change in the attitude of the official Vatican policy in Stepinac's case. All of these factors

³⁷ Tito's visit to Great Britain took place in March 1953, a few days after Stalin died. It was a return visit for Anthony Eden's visit to Yugoslavia the previous autumn. Religious demonstrations indeed took place during Tito's stay in England. For a detailed analysis of the visit and the British religious reaction to it see: K. Spehnjak. "Josip Broz Tito's Visit to Great Britain in 1953," *Review of Croatian History* 1:1 (2005), 273-293.

³⁸ PRO FO 371/ 102266 WY 1781/32.

³⁹ Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 132-133. For the relations between the Yugoslav state and the Catholic Church after 1953 see: M. Akmadža, "Pregovori Svete stolice i Jugoslavije i potpirivanje protokola iz 1966. godine," [Negotiations between the Vatican and Yugoslavia and the signing of the 1966 protocol] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 36:2 (2004), 473-503.

resulted in the denunciation of diplomatic relations on 17 December 1952. It can also be deduced from the British reports, that contrary to the similar grievances, no real rapprochement took place between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox churches, at least during the time frame of the analysis. It is also inferred from the British Foreign Office papers that the official British foreign policy did not want to intervene in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia, although the British public opinion was impressed by the religious grievances.