

Irina Ognyanova-Krivoshieva*

**ARCHBISHOP ALOYSIUS STEPINAC AND THE STRENGTHENING
OF THE COMMUNISTS IN POWER IN CROATIA IN THE 1940S**

(Summary)

Already during the Second World War, when it gradually imposed its power over vast Croatian territories, then within the boundaries of the Independent State of Croatia, and especially after its end, when it officially solidified its power, the Yugoslav Communist Party (YKP) began political repressions and trials against all its political opponents, one of which was the Catholic Church. Thousands of clergymen were sent to prisons, camps or were physically liquidated, and churches were massively destroyed in the spirit of the atheistic policy of the regime. Over time, Communist attacks on the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Zagreb Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac, escalated and culminated in the Stalinist political trial of September 1946. The reason for that was that the Archbishop did not give in to the pressure of the authorities, did not disconnect the ties of the Catholic Church in Croatia with Vatican and became a symbol of the Croatian nation and its struggle for independence and statehood.

Keywords: Archbishop Stepinac, Catholic Church, Independent State of Croatia, Yugoslav Communist Party, Josip Broz Tito, trials.

* Assoc. Prof. Irina Ognyanova-Krivoshieva, PhD - Institute for Balkan Studies and Centre of Thracology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; ORCID 0000-0002-0779-7169; e-mail: ognyanova@yahoo.com